

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Baldick is the author of *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932*, 1983. Julian Barnes's most recent novel, *Starting from the Sun*, has just been published. Geoffrey Blainey is Ernest Scott Professor of History at the University of Melbourne. His books include *Triumph of the Nomads: A History of Ancient Australia*, 1976. Bridget Brown's books include *Prancing Novels* (1973). Craig Brown's *The Marsh Marlowe Letters* was published in 1984. Anthony Bryer is Director of the University of Birmingham's Centre for Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek. His most recent book is *The Byzantine Monuments and Topography of the Pontus*, 1985. Anthony Burgess's most recent novel, *The Piano Players*, was published earlier this year. His *The Kingdom of the Wicked*, 1985, has recently been reissued in paperback. John Butt is a lecturer in Spanish at King's College, London. His books include *Writers and Politics in Modern Spain*, 1979. He is working on a new reference grammar of modern Spanish to be published next year. A. S. Byatt's latest novel, *Sill Life*, 1985, has just been reissued in paperback. Henry Chadwick is Regius Professor Emeritus of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. His *Augustine* was published earlier this year. Richard Davenport-Hines was joint winner of the 1985 Wolfson Prize for his business biography *Dudley Docker: The life and times of a trade warrior*, 1984. John Deathridge is co-author of the new Grove *Wagner*, 1984. Anthony de Jasay is the author of *The State*, 1985. Tony Gould is Books Editor of *New Society* and author of *Inside Outsider: The life and times of Colth MacInnes*, 1983. Andrew Graham-Yaoll's books include *The Forgotten Colony: A history of the English-speaking communities in Argentina*, 1981, and *A State of Fear: Memories of Argentina's nightmare*, which was published earlier this year. Ian Hamilton's biography of Robert Lowell was published in 1983. Christopher Hitchens is Washington columnist of the *Nation*. Peter Hylton teaches Philosophy at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He is working on a book on British Idealism and the development of Russell's philosophy. Alan Jenkins's poems appear in *New Chatter Poets*, which has just been published. Paul Kennedy is Dilworth Professor of History at Yale University. His most recent book is *Strategy and Diplomacy 1870-1945*, 1983. John Lucas's *Modern English Poetry from Hardy to Hughes* was published earlier this year. Donald Mitchell is the author of *Britten and Auden in the Thirties: The year 1936*, 1981. The third volume of his biography of Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Songs and symphonies of life and death*, was published earlier this year. D. Z. Phillips is Professor of Philosophy at University College, Swansea. His books include *Through a Darkening Glass: Philosophy, literature and cultural change*, 1981. David Proulx is co-editor of *The Magic Wheel*, which was published earlier this year. David Pryce-Jones's *Cyril Connolly: Journal and memoir* was published in 1983. His novel, *The Afternoon Sun*, was published earlier this year. Oliver Reynolds's collection of poems *Skevington's Daughter* was published last year.

Ann Pasternak Slater is the author of *Shakespeare the Director*, 1982. Frances Spalding is the author of *Roger Fry: Art and life*, 1981, and *Vancasa Bell*, 1983. Randall Stevenson is the author of *The British Novel Since the Thirties*, which was published earlier this year. John Sutherland is Visiting Professor in the Division of Humanities, California Institute of Technology. His most recent book is *Offensive Literature*, 1982. N. S. Sutherland is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex. His *The Price of Everything* was published earlier this year. Alan Sykes is a lecturer in Modern History at the University of St Andrews. His *Tariff Reform in British Politics 1903-1913* was published in 1979. George Thelmer is Editor of *Index on Censorship*. Leonard Thompson is the Charles J. Stillé Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University. He is the author of *The Political History of Apartheid*, 1985. John Weightman is the author of *The Concept of the Avant-Garde: Explorations on modernism*, 1973. Robert Wells's *Selected Poems* has just been published. Geoffrey Wheatcroft's *The Randlords*, 1985, has recently been reissued in paperback. Theodore Ziolkowski is Professor of German and Comparative Literature, and Dean of the Graduate School, at Princeton University. His most recent books are *The Classical German Elegy*, 1980, and *Varieties of Literary Thematics*, 1983.

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Sir William Walton: information, especially on archival materials and their locations, together with any personal information; for a biobibliography. Carolyn J. Smith, Reference Department, Kansas State University Library, Manhattan, Kansas 66506, USA.

Noel Rooke (1881-1953), English wood-engraver, book illustrator, painter and teacher at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, 1905-46; documents, reminiscences, whereabouts of impressions of his engravings, paintings, surviving wood-blocks, and information on his students, particularly Miss Vivien Gribble; for a Florin Press monograph and edition of his work. Justin Howes, 7 Anglo Terrace, London Road, Bath BA1 5NH.

Clongowes Wood College, SJ: personal recollections, also letters, papers, ephemera and photographs, especially from the nineteenth century; for a commissioned history of the college. Peter Costello, 15 Wellington Place, Dublin 4, Irish Republic.

Sylvia Plath: personal recollections or letters sought; for a biography. Paul Alexander, PO Box 20567, Midtown Station, New York City, New York 10129, USA.

The Mallarmé/Manet/Poe Raven of 1875: location of copies, particularly in private collections; for a study of variant printings. Breon Mitchell, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405, USA.

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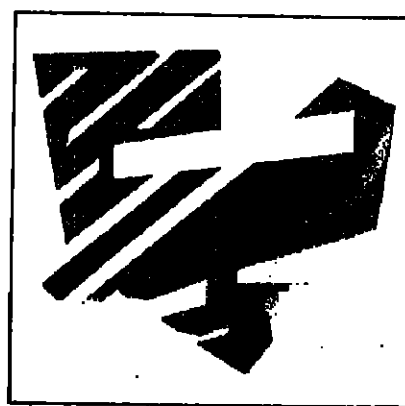
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Contents

AMERICAN HISTORY 1302, ART 1315, CLASSICS 1316, FICTION 1324-5, LANGUAGE 1305, LEARNED JOURNALS 1321-3, LITERARY THEORY 1306, LITERATURE 1295-6, 1326, MEMOIRS AND LETTERS 1299-30, MODERN HISTORY 1297-8, PSYCHOLOGY 1308-09, SOCIAL STUDIES 1301, TRAVEL 1304

- JOHN BAYLEY Donald Davie: *Czeslaw Milosz and the Insufficiency of Lyric* Henry Gifford: *Poetry in a Divided World* 1295-6
Edwin Honig (Editor): *The Poet's Other Voice – Conversations on literary translation* 1296
Yehoshua Porath: *In Search of Arab Unity 1930-1945* 1297
Michael Freedman: *Liberalism Divided – A study in British political thought 1914-1939* 1298
Reflections in a Train Window (poem) 1298
Caitlin Thomas with George Tremlett: *Callin – A warring absence* 1299
Richard Perceval Graves: *Robert Graves – The assault heroic 1895-1926* 1299
Glyn Daniel: *Some Small Harvest* 1300
Peter Medawar: *Memoir of a Thinking Radish – An autobiography* 1300
Alvin S. Parkes: *Off-beat Biologist* 1300
Barbara Miller Solomon: *In the Company of Educated Women – A history of women and higher education in America* 1301
Howard R. Bowen and Jack H. Schuster: *American Professors – A national resource imperiled* 1301
Howard Brick: *Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism – Social theory and political reconciliation in the 1940s* 1301
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Roy Andrew Miller: *Nihongo – In defence of Japanese* 1305
Margarita L. Khachikyan: *Khurrtskij Uvorskij Jazyki* 1305
John Sturrock: *Structuralism* 1306
J.G. Merquior: *From Prague to Paris – A critique of structuralist and post-structuralist thought* 1306
Scene of the Crime (poem) 1306
Jerome Bruner: *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* 1308-09
Behind the lines 1310
Sales of books and manuscripts 1310
Letters on Wagner's Antisemitism, Sergei Eisenstein, Empson on Eliot, etc 1311
Commentary
Flights of Fantasy (Clarendon Gallery) 1312
Angels of Anarchy and Machines for Making Clouds: Surrealism in Britain in the Thirties (Leeds City Art Galleries) 1312
David Roberts (Barbican City Art Gallery) 1312
Will Evans and Valentine: *Tons of Money* (Lyttelton Theatre) 1313
Ginger and Fred (Various cinemas) 1313
Charles Dickens: *David Copperfield* (BBC1) 1313
Bernard Shaw: *Too True to be Good* (Riverside Studios, Hammersmith) 1313
Laurence Sterne/Peter Buckman: *Tristram Shandy* (Oxford Playhouse) 1314
Beecham calendar 1314
Among this week's contributors 1314
Author, Author 1314
- JOHN POPE-HENNESSY Ronald Lightbown: *Manegna* 1315
PETER PARSONS Hans Dieter Betz (Editor): *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation – Including the demotic spells* 1316
PENELOPE MURRAY Deborah Steiner: *The Crown of Song – Metaphor in Pindar* Charles Segal: *Pindar's Mythmaking – The Fourth Pythian Ode* 1316
A change of venue: Russian Journals of the Emigration 1321
Among the Journals 1322-3
Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert (Editors): *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories* 1324
David Hughes and Giles Gordon (Editors): *Best Short Stories 1986* 1324
Robin Baird-Smith (Editor): *Winter's Tales – New series, Two* 1324
Meira Chand: *The Painted Cage* 1324
Josephine Saxton: *Little Tours of Hell – Tall tales of food and holidays* 1324
Frank Ormsby: *A Northern Spring* 1325
Anthony Cronin: *Letter to an Englishman* 1325
Paul Bowles: *Without Stopping, Midnight Mass and Other Stories* 1326
Millicent Dillon (Editor): *Selected Letters of Jane Bowles 1935-1970* 1326
M.M. Badawi: *Modern Arabic Literature and the West* 1326
Paperbacks 1327
Index of books reviewed 1327
- Cover picture Andrea Mantegna's self-portrait head; a detail from "The Trial of St James", it is reproduced from Ronald Lightbown's *Manegna*, which is reviewed on page 1315.

An involuntary witness

John Bayley

DONALD DAVIE
Czeslaw Milosz and the Insufficiency of Lyric
76pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.

HENRY GIFFORD
Poetry in a Divided World
111pp. Cambridge University Press. £15.
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These two lively and searching little books are each based on a course of lectures: Henry Gifford's on the Clark Lectures given at Trinity College, Cambridge, in the spring of 1985; Donald Davie's on the John C. Hodges Lectures delivered at the University of Tennessee in February 1984. Davie's essays constitute an amplified version of that series, which had the title: "Poetics of the Unfree World: Czeslaw Milosz". Gifford called his Clark Lectures "Poetry in a Divided World". The themes and preoccupations of both are very close together, and both are scholars of a wide range of poetry.

Even their chapter headings in one case coincide: Davie giving us one on "The Witness of Poetry", while Gifford's Chapter Two, which carries the basic challenge of his argument, is headed "The Nature and Validity of Poetic Witness". So important is the concept to the development of their theses that it seems worth asking what exactly is meant by it, and what it entails. Neither critic takes up the case of Wilfred Owen, but "all a poet can do today is war" – is that the general idea? Or does a witness suppose a judge and a jury, and if so who are they? – the reader? the tyrant? the State?

The query and the problem go further back than that, because both these sets of lectures are inspired by a third, whose title is repeated in both their chapter headings. In 1981-2 Czeslaw Milosz gave the Charles Eliot Norton lectures at Harvard under the title "The Witness of Poetry". Davie's lectures are specifically a gloss on those of Milosz, while Gifford's too cover the same ground and examine the same problem. Their "divided world" is that of East and West in our own time, but it is also different attitudes to poetry – the civic and the aesthetic, the traditional and the modernist – and the division between the poet's preoccupations and those of the society he lives in. Other divisions as well, no doubt. And in this context of "witness" Gifford invokes the words of Octavio Paz on Solzhenitsyn – "In a century of

false testimonies, a writer becomes the witness to man."

There are several assumptions and suppositions in play here, which can be sorted out and themselves queried, even though it seems unlikely that any conclusions can be reached. In 1952 Montale gave his discourse on "The Solitude of the Artist" at an international congress in Paris, in which he remarked that no writer in our time had been more isolated than Kafka, and yet "few have achieved communication as well as he did". Marina Tsvetaeva said the same thing more epigrammatically: "Art is an undertaking in common, performed by solitary people." The same point was made long ago, in a specifically English context, when Dr Johnson observed of Gray's "Elegy" that it contained sentiments to which every bosom returned an echo. Johnson must have intuited, though he did not feel it necessary to discuss the fact, that Gray was a solitary person whose "problem", to which he gave his own kind of expression in the "Elegy", was every bit as personal as Kafka's, and for that reason just as capable of universality.

In his Norton lectures Milosz implicitly contradicted this view of the matter, claiming that Romanticism, and after it Symbolism, had set the poet apart from the people, so that the poet at once complained of his solitude and was flattered by it – having things both ways, as artists are apt to do. Milosz had no words of contempt too strong for the kind of attitude embodied in Yeats's distinction between the poet (perhaps leagued, at least in imagination, with a few crazy peasants and aristocrats) and "all those whose minds, educated alone by schoolmasters and newspapers, are without the memory of beauty and emotional subtlety". Milosz ranged himself here on the side of his kinsman and mentor, Oscar Wilde, a poet who wrote in French, and whose ambition was to see poetry return to the people, and "be initiated into the most profound secret of the labouring masses".

The trouble with this is that it begins to seem like a kind of shadow-boxing, in which noble ideals, theatrical stances and dogmatic political attitudes all take part together, associated and compromised by a general atmosphere of lectures and manifestos, the cultural congress and "The Position of the Artist in Our Time". This becomes a paper industry like any other, harmless enough, but consumed from within by an unadmitted internal hypocrisy. It becomes part of the process of saving appearances and creating status, a mock trial in which the witnesses

have their travel and hotel expenses taken care of and have the chance to meet their peers for a good intellectual gossip. True witness is about as far as possible removed from those who thus discuss and define it, as the doctrinal lucubrations of the early Church were from the original martyrs in the arena. Donald Davie, always rational and unimpressed by the more spectacular claims made for the unique dilemma of Culture in Our Time, may have something like this in mind when he suggests that

Surprisingly, these Harvard lectures... have the effect – which Milosz himself may not be wholly aware of, and might not willingly acknowledge – of establishing that, when all is said and done, the World War II experience of eastern Europe, not excluding the appalling experience of East European Jewry, does not compel us to conceive of the office of poetry in some unprecedented, disillusioned, and peculiarly exciting way.

And Davie reminds us of that now classic figure, the concentration camp commandant devoutly listening to Brahms in his spare moments, and the generously indignant but surely highly illogical reaction that this proves there must be something rotten in the state of Western culture, and even in the music of Brahms himself. In fact, and either knowingly or unknowingly, the accusers of Western art who put the finger on Goethe and Schiller as in some sense collaborators in the Holocaust are only echoing Lenin, and before him, Tolstoy. It must have been the pervasive influence of Tolstoyan guilt about art which made Lenin pronounce it impossible to listen to Beethoven in a society so vile and unjust as that of pre-revolutionary Russia.

Tolstoy's guilt made explicit something long felt by all the Romantic artists. Art and religion having been separated, it was natural that the social solidarities implied if not necessarily practised in the Christian tradition should also be lost touch with by art. Some poets, like Keats, regretted this: some, like Baudelaire, appeared to rejoice, as Milosz says, in the artist's new and arrogant solitude. Yet solitariness is also a religious and Christian tradition, and it is equally possible to hear in Baudelaire, as T. S. Eliot did, a voice crying in the wilderness, calling on sinners to repent. The argument gets abstract, goes round in circles, resolving itself into the inevitably comic spectacle of poets and artists trying to decide what line they should take. Aware of this dilemma Keats thought that if poetry didn't come as naturally as the leaves to the tree it had better not come at all. But Davie feels that the poet's

"responsibility" today is to abjure lyricism, at least in part, in favour of "philosophical ideology"; and he claims the support of Milosz in holding "to a conviction that the responsible poet today, whether under totalitarianism or in the free world, cannot afford to write only poetry that is lyrical, because to do so is to give up using language to change society".

Surely the notion of a poet's "responsibility" is one that applies not to actual poets and their poetry but to that world of cultural weekends and the Artists in Our Time? The Russian poet Ratushinskaya, when in a labour camp in the Soviet Union, was not thinking of her responsibility while writing poems, or when she wrote the poems that sent her there. She is more like Keats's thrush, to whom the evening listens, though it is for ideologists to speak, and for the spokesmen of philosophical ideology to point out, for example, that once Peter the Great had taken over the Church in Russia he inevitably made what Victor Frank called "a profound spiritual vacuum", to be filled since by Russian poets and writers. Poets and ideologists are far apart today, though that is nothing new, and the real message of all three sets of lectures really comes back to Tsvetaeva's pithy observation that art is an undertaking in common, performed by solitary people.

That is not to say that poets desire the state of solitude, where their poetry is concerned: it is rather, as Montale implied, a condition of the most complete communication. Tsvetaeva's bitter point was that no one read her poems in Europe where they could be printed: only in Russia where they could not be. Milosz points out that an enormous printing of poems has been made in Warsaw, and sold, as it were, before breakfast. But it seems doubtful whether there is any deep lesson for writers to learn from this, or whether it justifies Milosz's contempt for the frivolity of Western literature. He must know that in all societies literature exists to divert us from, as well as to remind us of, our responsibilities; and that diversion is the natural goal in a free mercantile society, as natural as bearing witness comes to be in a tyrannical one.

Milosz's work is in any case of many kinds. Nothing could be more intensely and movingly lyrical than the first poem in his collection *Bells in Winter*, "Encounter", which recalls a moment at dawn in the Polish countryside when a bird flew over and a hare ran across the road. That poem was written before the war, when Milosz was very young, but in some curious way the intensity of its expression foreshadows

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all wars, separations, anguishes – all *moments* recalled, both preserving these things and saved from them. "Encounter" is strangely akin to poems of Zbigniew Herbert, written after the war, like "Pohle" and "Seven Men", which are very deliberate although equally detached meditations in the shadow of past events. "Bearing witness" can only be an ambiguous business for a good poet, and in many cases "they do it very well that do it not".

Overdoing it can also add to the ambiguities. Wilfred Owen's poem "Insensibility" bears very deliberate, even portentous, witness against those who have no proper feelings about the horror of war, or who have stifled them.

By choice they made themselves immune:
To pity and whatever means in man
Before the last sea and the hapless stars.
Whatever mourns when many leave these shores;
Whatever shares
The eternal reciprocity of tears.

Much of the effect of this deeply moving poem comes from the contrast between the poet's intention – plain anger, pity and resentment, righteous indignation, the wish to denounce – and the tone of subtle calm and elaboration that the verse achieves. Owen's editors, from Blunden on, flinched from that word "mourns" and altered it to "mourns", which is thus repeated in the next line but one. "Mourns", however, is a clear afterthought of Owen's own, obviously designed to fit into the vowel harmony of the passage. Editors flinched because of the word's comic incongruity – mourning is a so much less dignified concept than mourning – and because the voice of actual soldiers' ironies can be heard in it ("Give over mourning", and the famous shell called "Moaning Minnie"). Owen probably did not intend these ironies, but had in mind the word's melodious Tennysonian associations, carried on in the Tennysonian line which follows. The end of "Insensibility" is thus a kind of involuntary witness to the humour and suffering in the trenches, as well as one of high and serious indignation; and involuntary witnesses are sometimes more persuasive than calculating ones.

Milosz's memoir of childhood, *The Issa Valley*, is uncalculating in this sense, and in his preface Donald Davie takes me to task for having called it a masterpiece which shows up more modish works in the West today. I would stand by that judgment, for the peculiar force and charm of Milosz's reconstruction owe much both to the overwhelming presence of the political, and the way it is taken for granted, left unspoken. This neutral, quizzical, lightly courteous behaviour in the witness box seems typical of post-war Polish poetry, but it goes, as Davie demonstrates, with something quite different: a capacity to think, to reason and to hypothesize, which is unwaveringly rigorous and yet miraculously compatible with the sureness and suppleness of the poetic, what Mandelstam called "the consciousness of itself as being right", which is "the most precious thing of all about poetry".

It is this gift which Davie, and perhaps Milosz himself, oppose to the Lyric, although such an opposition hardly strikes one as being more than formally significant. Davie examines with care a poem which Milosz has himself commented on at some length: his poem "No More", which relates

how I changed
My views on poetry, and how it came to be
That I consider myself today one of the many
Merchants and artisans of Old Japan.
Who arranged verses about cherry blossoms,
Chrysanthemums and the full moon;

The poem goes on to wish it could describe the courtesans of Venice, teasing a peacock as in a Carpaccio picture, and wishes that it could reach their final reality "In a graveyard whose gates are licked by greasy water", the actualness of the "last-used comb", which still awaits its discovery by art. But as Milosz observes, the poet's language is never valid enough to encounter the world, whatever graphic proof it may try to give that it can. Only the foolish poet and (he implies) particularly the poet of our time, will think, or delude the public into thinking, that he can "encounter the world directly".

Milosz is not only suggesting here – very obliquely and by means of an incongruously

elegant example – that poets cannot directly confront concentration camps and genocide. He is also suggesting, with considerable irony, that for poetry to be an honourable activity of the "people" it must be practised by them as delicately as it was by the "merchants and artists of Old Japan", that the "versifier's craft" must "take an integral place in the habits of all society". Down with "the isolated and alienated poet", who in the long run has only succeeded in bringing poetry into disregard and contempt with the general public.

Like so much in Milosz's (and in Davie's) programmatic statement this is only schematically true. As with "bearing witness", so with "isolation". Both are matters of result rather than intention. Emily Dickinson or Tsvetaeva – or Philip Larkin come to that – are all examples of the solitary poet, and yet, as Gifford admirably shows about the first two in his chapter on "Isolation and Community", they are also poets who create and symbolize the idea of a community, and with whom a community of some sort comes strongly to identify. He is particularly good on the case of Emily Dickinson, who, as he points out, takes her poetic voice to a remarkable degree not so much from the writings in which her solitary being was steeped – Shakespeare, the Bible, Sir Thomas Browne – as from the American idiom she heard all about her in the homeliest domestic circumstances.

I shan't walk the "Jasper" barefoot –
Ransomed folks won't laugh at me?
Maybe "Eden" ain't so lonesome
As New England used to be.

Speaking "New Englandly" like that, though without conscious intention, brings into the overwhelming solipsism of her verses the ghostly idiom of "ransomed folks" who cared nothing for those verses but yet are, in some curious sense, a necessary part of them.

It is in these obscure ways that what Mandelstam called "seriousness and honour" come into poetry, making it the vessel of "involuntary truth" (the phrase is Gifford's) and of what Milosz in his Nobel lecture spoke of as our "unavowed need for true values". That they are unavowed today, in poetry as in daily existence, may be, in some odd way, a condition of their continued existence. Could it be that Donald Davie's "insufficiency of lyric" is really no more than poetry's discovery, in our time and just before it, of its inability to be authentic and at the same time to preach "seriousness and honour" openly? Why is it that today we turn with a kind of repulsion from Yeats's rhetorical questions?

Did words of mine put too great strain
On that woman's feeling brain?
Could my spoken words have checked
That whereby a house lay wrecked?

Just as we turn from any poetry which endeavours too consciously to confront the evils that have come upon us in the twentieth century and the bankruptcy of language which they have seemed to bring? Even Akhmatova, who wrote her magnificent "Requiem" after a woman in the queue outside the prison where her son was held said to her "Can you describe this?" and she replied "I can", is truer to her poetic self in "Poem Without a Hero", in which public event appears almost solely in the guise of her own private imagination. And it certainly seems to be the case that in both these courses of lectures the authors were pre-occupied, even if unconsciously, with the phenomenon of indirectness in our present tradition of poetry. Surely Davie must be right that the peculiar horrors of our time "do not compel us to conceive of the office of poetry in some unprecedented, disillusioned, and peculiarly exacting way", and yet if those horrors have had one radical effect on the language of poetry it is to make it irreversibly "slant" when it comes to telling the truth. Can we imagine a time again when a poet can write, as Samuel Daniel did with workmanlike simplicity in 1607,

I know I shall be read, among the rest,
So long as men speak English, and so long
As verse and virtue shall be in request.

Verse and virtue may still be in request, but hardly any poet today would be able to proclaim so openly in his poetry that one cannot exist without the other.



Ono Dix's 'ecching' 'Kriegskrippe' is reproduced from Serge Sabarsky's Graphics of the German Expressionists (239pp. Lund Humphries. £25. 08531 4969).

Remaking the word

Charles Tomlinson

EDWIN HONIG (Editor)
The Poet's Other Voice: Conversations on literary translation
218pp. University of Massachusetts Press.
£23.75 (paperback, £10.45).
087023 4765

"Well, Michael – I'm aware you're one of the best English translators of German poetry there is," Edwin Honig's breezy onset with Michael Hamburger characterizes the tone of this book of interviews with translators – friendly, a bit redundant, almost endearingly overbearing on the part of the interviewer as he gets the wind into his sail and then has to be checked by the interviewee. "Wait, just a second", says John Hollander, so that the next two times round Honig is reined back to "Yes" and "Right". Sometimes he asks three questions at once.

The endearing aspect is evident in the preface, where Honig disarmingly admits to the shortcomings of the interview format. The book itself is already a translation – from the oral to the written. Might this not lead to a certain looseness? Indeed it might, and our editor is only too willing to throw in a couple more objections – "the notorious disadvantages of the spontaneous taped interview" and "the sometimes apparent thinness of the artifice of conversational exchange". However – and this however carries the day – he thinks these are things we should bear with in order "to uncover certain of the unperceived dynamics of poetic translation".

What emerges from the interviews, in fact, is a good deal of common sense on the part of the translators. Hamburger, Christopher Middleton, Octavio Paz, Richard Wilbur, Edmund Keeley are particularly rewarding here. Honig tries to interest some of them in his "meta-physical idea . . . of the absent text as an avenue into the subject in its true depth". This difficult concept has to do with the cabalistic belief that in the beginning God's word was lost or broken up, and with the notion that both the original writer and the translator are trying to put it together again. "The attempt to recover a lost or absent text that once existed is at the basis of translation", says Honig. Octavio Paz inspects this thought and relates it to Baudelaire's poetic correspondences. He is about to tackle the Cabala also when Honig unexpectedly cuts across his bows with a thought on the medieval idea of the world as the book of creatures, so we are left darkling.

Christopher Middleton, with empirical distrust, believes that

the only conceivable *Utopia* or absent text is the one we are helped to conceive of by the existence of a text before us. And, in my logic, that is to deny the pre-existence of an *Utopia*. The *Utopia* can only be the imaginary construct that we can obtain *post rem*, the *rem* being the text as it is. It cannot be something metaphysical that pre-exists or is *ante rem*.

But the last word in this last interview of the book is left to Honig: "Nobody has seen the face of God; though the Bible says He created us in His own image." If all this is part of "the

unperceived dynamics of poetic translation", I preferred Middleton's quiet insistence:

I think that becoming receptive to a particular text and the ways in which one shows one is receptive, are things it's better not to speak about. Speaking about them upsets the balance of the elements in some strange kind of way.

Passages one remembers after putting down this book include Edmund Keeley's incisive words on the relationship between Seferis and Cavafy – words that are the fruit of long experience and much knowledge gained in front of the text, and also from his own personal acquaintance with Seferis. Paz is good on his translation of a Mallarmé sonnet and his extraordinary re-creation of the famous "Aboli bibelot d'innatit sonore" as "Espiral espirada de inanidad sonora" where *bibelot* gets slightly displaced, but the governing image of the seashell is beautifully maintained, as are the idea of extinction (*abolitospirada*) and the sound play (*bibelotspiral*). Paz's brilliant account of this, given at greater length than an interview would allow, appears in *El signo y el garabato*, 1973. Hollander has suggestive things to say about Milton (though a few quotations would have helped) and so has Robert Fitzgerald on Homer and the oral tradition.

The interviewees were given a chance to go over their contributions and revise them. Some did, some did not. Many spontaneities could have been removed and the attractiveness and accuracy of this book greatly increased. Hollander's version of the last line of Dryden's "To the Memory of Mr Oldham" is seriously misquoted; so (less damagingly) is Michael Levens' translation of "Prufrock" in the Paz. It is not true that Wallace Stevens "never did any translations" – he translated Léon Paul Fargue and Jean Le Roy. *Renga*, the collective poem of which Paz was one of the co-authors (I was another), was not written "overnight" in Paris hotel, but over five consecutive mornings plus one evening session, between March 30 and April 3, 1969. Honig should have removed his supposition that it was Hugh MacDiarmid who put Mayakovsky into Scots and given the credit to Edwin Morgan. MacDiarmid's *In Memoriam James Joyce* does not "use dialects and various languages". Yes, MacDiarmid did translate some Rilke, but not into Lallans. Nor did Byron write "epics", or Dryden "imitations" in the sense that Pope did with his Horace – Dryden's "Character of a Good Person, Imitated from Chaucer" is exceptional in his oeuvre. The proposition (Honig reporting an article of Belitt's) that "Lowell is . . . probably more faithful in his imitations than Pope and Dryden were in theirs" is invalidated by this difference between the two poets and made hopelessly woolly by that "probably".

Willard Trask (he turned to translating as a disappointed poet – that's something Dryden and Pope wouldn't have said!) is interrupted in his interview by the dinner bell. "Can we pick up our conversation later?" asks Honig. It's clear they couldn't and didn't. Yet the remark is left. And that is typical of much that should have been edited out or corrected in this book, where a certain scattiness distracts one's attention from its genuine interest.

A vision in the desert

Albert Hourani

YEHOSHUA PORATH
In Search of Arab Unity 1930–1945
376pp. Frank Cass. £25 (paperback, £12.50).
0714632643

The creation of the League of Arab States in 1945 was the result of efforts spread over many years and given direction by a number of different interests: the wish of King Faysal I of Iraq and the politicians around him to create a union between Iraq and Syria, the ambition of his elder brother Amir 'Abdullah of Transjordan to become king of enlarged Syria, the need of Syrians and Palestinians, engaged in their own struggles for independence, to obtain support from other Arab countries which had greater freedom of action, and the desire of Egypt, once the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 gave it a certain power of following its own foreign policy, to find allies among its immediate neighbours.

Every time the question of unity or alliance between Arab states was raised, British politicians and officials had to take up an attitude towards it, to decide whether to use British power in order to encourage or oppose it, or direct it into channels in which it could do no harm to British interests. So all-pervasive and dominant was the power of Britain in the Middle East at that time, it is not surprising that, when the League came into existence, many of those who observed the process, and even some of those who took part in it, should have believed that it must have been created with British encouragement, or even at British initiative.

Yehoshua Porath's book is primarily a study of British official reactions to the various movements towards Arab unity, from the time when they began to take effective form until the conferences of Alexandria and Cairo at which the League was created. In so far as ministers and officials took the movements seriously and were prepared to support them, their main reason appears from his pages to have been the hope that Arab unity might make it easier to solve the intractable problem of Palestine. Both pro-Arab and pro-Zionist officials saw some advantage in it. For those who were alarmed by the extent to which pro-Zionist pressure in London was forcing British policy in a direction which they did not believe to be that which national interests would recommend, the creation of a bloc of Arab states might act as a countervailing pressure, and rulers or ministers of those states, with their experience of responsible decision, and their own national interests to consider, might be able to persuade the Palestinians to go further in the way of compromise than they would otherwise be willing to do; it was for such reasons that representatives of Arab governments, as well as leaders of the Palestinian Arabs, were invited to the St James's Conference in 1939. On the other hand, to those who believed that the only solution to the problem lay in the creation of a Jewish state, the idea of an Arab federation held out the hope that the Arabs of Palestine might acquiesce in the loss of their local predominance if their interests were guarded by an Arab federal government.

Put forward as early as 1920 by Sir Herbert Samuel and others, this idea gave birth to one of the most curious episodes which Dr Porath narrates. In 1939, during the early months of the war, St John Philby, the famous Arabian traveller and friend of King-Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, met the Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann, and gave him an idea for settling the problem of Palestine. The Jews would be given full rights of immigration into Palestine, the Arabs would be moved out of it; the king would help in this process, and the Zionists for their part would help in bringing about Arab independence and unity; in return for his help, the king would become head of the new united state and be given some £20 million to ease his financial problems, which at the moment were acute, because of the war and the stoppage of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Weizmann mentioned this idea in a meeting with Churchill some time afterwards; Churchill, whose mind had been moving on not dissimilar lines, seems to have shown interest, and may have given Weizmann some encouragement to try to enlist the support of

Roosevelt. In spite of the scepticism of some of his officials, Roosevelt also displayed interest in the idea, and sent an emissary of his own to Abd al-Aziz to find out what he really thought of it. At this point the house of cards suddenly collapsed: the king told the emissary that he was unwilling to see any Zionist representative, and particularly unwilling to see Dr Weizmann, who had tried to bribe him with an offer of £20 million.

Seen in retrospect, it is difficult to understand how anyone could have taken the idea seriously. On a matter of this gravity, Philby was not a person whose political judgment could be trusted. From the beginning, most British and American officials were doubtful of it, and so was Moshe Shertok, the only Zionist leader of the time with any real understanding of Middle Eastern politics. Weizmann may have tried to give Roosevelt an exaggerated view of the extent to which he had the backing of Churchill; at one moment Churchill had to point out angrily that Weizmann "had no authority to speak for him". Both Churchill and Roosevelt may at this point have had a certain over-confidence in their power to remake the world at the end of the war, and too simple a view of the complexities of the problem: Roosevelt is reported to have said that "the whole Palestine question was merely a matter of a little bribe".

In general, however, the attitude of British officials in London towards plans for Arab unity was reserved if not hostile. They did not believe that the formation of a united Arab state would by itself do anything to solve the problem of Palestine; so long as Britain was following a policy in regard to Jewish immigration which the Arabs of Palestine opposed, the creation of an Arab union would not remove their opposition, but might make it more formidable. For the most part they did not believe it would be possible to persuade the Syrians to accept 'Abdullah as their king, although Churchill had given him some vague words of encouragement in 1921, which 'Abdullah later claimed to have been a promise. As for Iraqi hopes of union with Syria, for Britain to encourage these would have been to incur the hostility of Saudi Arabia, and it was a principle of policy not to be put into a position where a choice had to be made between the support of the Hashimite and Saudi dynasties.

When the different movements began to come together in the wartime discussions which were finally to lead to the creation of the League, the Foreign Office, as Porath shows, was reluctant to do anything to encourage them. Officials would have preferred the whole question to be left until after the war. They did not wish to oppose it openly, but tried to put pressures behind the scenes; when these did not succeed, they tried at least to ensure that nothing was said or done which might have an adverse effect upon Anglo-French relations in Syria, or upon the situation in Palestine. If a conference could not be avoided, they wished Saudi Arabia to be represented because of the king's natural caution, and the degree to which at that time he was dependent upon British support. It is true that the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, made two statements of support for "any scheme that commands general approval", in 1941 and 1943 respectively, but they were vague, intended partly to counteract the effect of policies which Arab nationalists regarded as hostile, and made in the belief that the Arabs would be incapable of reaching general agreement.

The evidence which Porath has found of the caution and reservations of British officials in London is convincing, but, as he points out, the attitude of many officials in the Middle East was different. Cornwallis and Lamson, ambassadors in Baghdad and Cairo respectively, the High Commissioner in Palestine, MacMichael, and the Minister of State in Cairo, Casey, seem to have been more favourably inclined towards the idea of Arab unity, and less inclined to give weight to the difficulties it might create in British relations with France. Around them was a mass of officials, journalists and others who tended to be more outspoken in their support of Arab nationalist aspirations towards independence and unity, and who may have helped to give Arab politicians the belief that, whatever they were told officially, they were in fact doing what the British wanted.

The hesitations and ambiguities of British policy are well and fully recorded by Porath, in an examination of British sources as careful and meticulous as we have learned to expect of him. (The proof-reading in the early part of the book has been less than perfect, and there are a few errors of fact, none of them substantial except for a misinterpretation on p 282 of Musa 'Alami's attitude to Jewish immigration, as expressed in his statement to the Alexandria conference.) The book is not altogether easy to read. Porath takes a certain knowledge of the subject for granted, and he has organized his material by topics rather than chronologically. Faysal's plans, 'Abdullah's ambitions, the attempt to solve the problem of Palestine by way of an Arab federation, the wartime negotiations, are all dealt with separately, and documents and events which are relevant to all of them are brought in piecemeal or repetitiously.

In *Search of Arab Unity*, then, is an authoritative study of British attitudes, but it is, as its title might be taken to imply, a full study of that search itself? Porath has shown us clearly that it was not the British who were the searchers. The roots of the movement must be sought elsewhere, and the sources which he has been able to use do not uncover them entirely. He himself knows this; in his preface he expresses his regret that Arabic documents have not been available to him. He has tried to make up for their absence by fairly wide, although less than exhaustive, reading in Arabic memoirs and histories, but on the whole his interpretations of the ideas and motives of Arab politicians and rulers are those of the British officials who observed them.

When relying on memoranda and minutes written by officials for each other, it is difficult to tell which of them really played a part in shaping policy. One may ask, for example, whether the "Philby plan", for all the pages it filled, played any effective part, or whether a memorandum written by Professor H. A. R. Gibb on Arab federation was taken seriously at any level at which it might have affected the

formation of policy. Another danger is that British officials, in that age of still confident imperial rule, and working within the security of the fifty-year rule, tended to write in a cynical and derogatory way about the motives of those who lay beneath their power: Nuri Sa'id becomes "a devious intriguer, with a passion for having his fingers in every pie . . . we can at any rate hear what he has to say, however unintelligible it may be". Porath's tone is always respectful, never derogatory, but he does tend to explain the actions of Arab politicians in purely tactical terms, or as the products of ambition, rivalry and suspicion. This is undoubtedly true of most politicians, and may have been particularly true of Arab politicians of that generation, trained in the traditions of Ottoman statecraft, and brought up in an environment where mutual trust was not great. Politicians who believe in nothing at all, and are moved only by ambition and rivalry, may be less common, however, than those in whom the desire to obtain and retain power is somehow intertwined with some idea of the purposes for which power can be used. It is therefore worth our while to ask what those who spoke about Arab unity and worked to bring it about meant by it.

Partly, no doubt, it was a question of political fashion; pan-Arabism was a reflection of those other "pan" movements which expressed a certain romantic view of history and society. A more recent fashion was for "regional arrangements", which seemed, to those thinking about the international order after the war, to provide a guarantee for peace. There was also the hope – which proved to be an illusion – that a number of weak Arab States, if brought together, would generate a strength which would help Syrians, Palestinians, Egyptians and North Africans in their outstanding disputes with the British and French. Behind such calculations, however, there lay a vision, or rather three different kinds of vision, linked with real or imagined collective memories.

One was the vision of a nation which had

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Planning consensus obtained

John Campbell

MICHAEL FREEDEN
Liberalism Divided: A study in British political thought 1914-1939
399pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £27.50.
0 19827432 7

Historians of the Liberal Party have often consoled themselves with the notion of ideological life after death, asserting the posthumous victory of liberal ideas even after the once-great parliamentary party had splintered itself into bickering irrelevance. Both the Labour and Conservative Parties, it is claimed, were so effectively imbued with the values of liberalism that the disappearance of the Party which had made its propagation its special charge was not after all to be regretted, but almost to be celebrated. Hitherto there has always been a flavour of self-congratulation about this reassuring analysis, which has kept it from being entirely convincing. The value of Michael Freeden's new book, *Liberalism Divided: A study in British political thought 1914-1939*, is not that the central idea is in itself original, but that he supports it with a breadth of reading and an intricacy of definition that raise it above the level of partisan special pleading and should go far to establish it as a proven truth.

Unusually, Freeden takes the trouble to define what liberalism is. Too often this is assumed to be obvious – hence the widespread impression of it as essentially woolly. But this is not primarily a work of political narrative nor a

critique of Liberal policy, but a meticulous exploration of political philosophy. Freeden identifies what he calls the "core", "adjacent" and "peripheral" beliefs of liberalism, and prefaces this with a suggestive and salutary warning against regarding political ideologies either as complete and mutually exclusive in themselves or as the exclusive property of any one political party. Rather, he prefers to see a whole range of items of ideological furniture which can be arranged and rearranged in any number of different combinations to create many different intellectual "rooms", all of which can legitimately be labelled "liberal" or "socialist". Liberated by this perspective from paying too much attention to party labels, he is able to demonstrate, first, that in Britain between the wars it was within liberalism that the serious thinking about the problems of twentieth-century democracy was taking place – particularly on the role of the State, the balance between freedom and equality, and the regulation of industry; and second, that the most influential Labour thinkers – he specifically discusses Laski, Tawney and Cole – for all that they called themselves socialists, were in their central preoccupations and responses essentially liberal. It is, he suggests, largely a function of Labour's electoral success since 1945 that their ideas have tended to be classified uncritically under the heading of socialism.

Within the liberal house are many mansions. Using his analysis of "core" and "adjacent" beliefs, Freeden distinguishes two equally legitimate streams of liberal thinking in the 1920s, which he calls "centrist" and "left".

(though it is difficult to see why "centrist" should not be more honestly acknowledged as "right"). The common core comprised such values as liberty (however defined), rationality, a belief in gradual change, a commitment to legality and constitutionality, and a concern for the general good. Beyond this, he suggests, "Centrist-liberalism used adjacent concepts such as individualism, private property and security to surround its liberal core; left-liberalism made social justice, welfare and community pull in another direction". As a matter of fact this dichotomy was broadly reflected in the political divide between Asquith and Lloyd George (had that not been so complicated by personalities) and eventually in the steady peeling-off of disillusioned Liberals to the Conservative and Labour parties.

But such crude political echoes are not Freeden's subject; virtually the only prominent politicians to make more than a fleeting appearance in his pages are the very few, like C. F. G. Masterman and Herbert Samuel, who took an interest in philosophy. The central figures of his book are all those tireless liberal thinkers and ideologues who continued, after 1914-18, as before, to pour out book after book of high-level political theory, reflection and disputation: L. T. Hobhouse and J. A. Hobson (in its concentration on these two Freeden's book is a sort of sequel to Peter Clarke's *Liberals and Social Democrats*, reviewed in the TLS, November 23, 1979), C. D. Burns, J. M. Robertson, Elliot Dodds, Gilbert Murray, Philip Kerr (Lord Lothian) and several more. Above all, the "left-liberal, centrist-liberal" distinction is most clearly illuminated in the writings of E. D. Simon and the exceptionally prolific (but in this company revealed as rather unsophisticated) Ramsay Muir.

These two, Muir and Simon, were the principal founders of the Liberal Summer Schools, which Freeden confirms as the most seminal and creative focus of political thinking between the wars. (He disputes, however, the central role usually thought to have been played in the Summer Schools by Keynes; Freeden considers Keynes doubtfully a liberal at all, and Keynesianism not the most significant outcome of the movement.) The most philosophically significant and forward-looking product of the Summer School was the famous Liberal "Yellow Book", *Britain's Industrial Future*, a remarkably successful attempt to formulate a coherent and practical synthesis between individualism and collectivism which led a few years later to the all-party independent manifesto *The Next Five Years* and ultimately to the almost universal acceptance of the mixed economy that emerged from 1939-45. Politically, it was the buzz-word "planning" that became the common denominator on which nearly every shade of political opinion from moderate socialist to progressive conservative could agree. At the philosophical level, too, the idea of planning – bringing the "centrist-liberal" preoccupation with economic efficiency together with the "left-liberal" concern for community – was also the magic formula which reunited, at the heart of this wider consensus, the two strands of liberalism.

With a rather sudden leap forward, Freeden ends his book with the Beveridge Report, which he sees as setting the seal on the synthesis of inter-war liberalism with what the Labour Party was now happy to claim as socialism. Of course, the few unreconstructed socialists still articulate in the Labour Party in 1945, most prominently Nye Bevan, did not regard Beveridge as socialism at all. But Bevan's neo-Marxist fundamentalism had never had much place in Labour's thinking. As early as 1924 Hobhouse, commenting perceptively on an article by a then obscure Labour MP, could see little distinction between "the social liberalism of recent times and . . . its twin, the ethical Socialism described by Major Attlee". Though British socialists spent the next twenty years denigrating the Liberal Party and indignantly differentiating themselves from liberalism, the ideological outlines of what Paul Addison has called "Attlee's consensus" were in fact largely determined between the wars by the indefatigable but hitherto underrated band of high-minded liberal – and, yes, for the most part stoutly liberal – philosophers grouped around the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Nation* and the Liberal Summer School. We were indeed by 1945 "all liberals now".

Wife of wrath

John Kelly

Caitlin Thomas with GEORGE TREMLETT
Caitlin: A warning absence
212pp. Secker and Warburg. £10.95.
0436518503

The life of Dylan Thomas is an oft-told tale in which his wife, Caitlin, has generally been treated with a circumspect lack of sympathy. Now she and the indefatigable George Tremlett, who has rendered down fifty hours of interview into the present book, have given her side of the marriage and we need no longer be circumspect. This is not emotion recollected in tranquillity: she still feels "a terrible rage" and a rawness, which, despite thirty years of whisky and self-pity, has not ceased to bleed. Hardly had the tape begun to roll when she announced that "I never had an orgasm in all my years with Dylan, and that lies at the heart of our problems". Here it seems is a book for which "kiss

and tell" would be a euphemism, and Tremlett soon congratulates himself that she has "prepared herself not only to face the truth but to tell it".

He has deceived himself. Caitlin Thomas is too self-centred to tell the truth, and the interest of this book lies not in its biographical disclosures (most of which have long been known or surmised), still less in its insights into the poetry (for there are none), but in its revelation of two flawed characters; its very contradictions, self-delusions and plain whining give it a strident authenticity. Its qualities are those of a Browning monologue rescripted by Strindberg, and in places it resembles a parody of "My Last Duchess". "It wouldn't have been so bad if he had been discriminating about it", she writes of Dylan's affability, "but I found him treating other people just the same way that he treated me."

Since the laws of consanguinity ruled out his mother, it is difficult to imagine who would have made a perfect wife for Dylan Thomas.

Hello to all that

Dominic Hibberd

ROBERT PERCEVAL GRAVES
Robert Graves: The assault heroic 1895-1926
432pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £14.95.
0297789430

Robert Graves: The assault heroic, the first volume in what is presumably to be a three-decker biography, begins and ends with Graves setting out for his Cairo professorship in 1926. Within this frame are fitted his years as a Carthusian, a Fusilier and a struggling young writer. Richard Perceval Graves, a professional biographer and the poet's nephew, does his job devoutly and well, and it seems meaningful to hope, as one must, that the blurb will eventually be proved too ambitious in its claim that this "will become the definitive biography". The author himself readily admits to puzzles and gaps in the record. He has made good use of a splendid collection of family papers, but he does not seem to have pursued his inquiries much beyond that, nor to have consulted the unpublished material that has already found its way into British and North American libraries. So this is a family biography, offered with an engaging combination of personal modesty and family pride, but it does not tell us much about the origins and development of the poet's ideas. Nor is it especially well written; R. P. Graves does not always remember his uncle's maxim that verbs and nouns are preferable to adjectives and adverbs ("Heinrich, a large, strong, vigorous, self-reliant man . . .").

None the less this is an interesting book. The family emerges strongly, as one would expect. These Edwardian Graveses rush about in a flurry of late departures and forgotten sandwiches, keeping in touch with their many friends and relations, preaching at each other, revering cleverness, squabbling and forgiving, discussing, picking blackberries, writing, working and playing elaborate games. Alfred Perceval Graves, the father, belonged to a distinguished Anglo-Irish family and was well known as a poet; with his high principles and impatient energy, he seems to have been a remarkable character, for ever labouring to advance his children's prospects. Like his brother, C. L. Graves, and in due course Robert, who must have learned from both of them, he was skilled in the witty use of rhyme and rhythm. Robert's mother was German, saintly and devoted, putting heavy moral pressure on her children to succeed and be good. And at bottom Robert was good, despite the trail of smashed friendships he left behind him; there is something endearing even in his angriest letters and most gossip stories. In person and character, though, he was irredeemably awkward. Not quite a Celt and not quite a Teuton, with a home in the Welsh hills and a very English education, he seems never to have been at ease anywhere, and his inherited tendency to sudden rages and enthusiasms made him hard to live with at school and in the Army.

One small example of the research that could still be done is suggested by the strange

fervour with which Graves defended his Charterhouse love-affair with "Peter" Johnstone, when questioned by the headmaster. When he came up with strongly held ideas in later life, it was often because he was learning from a guru. A clue in this case is a letter (now in the Sheffield Central Library) which he wrote from Charterhouse in 1914 to Edward Carpenter, thanking the sage for his advocacy of ideal love between men. R. P. Graves does not mention Carpenter, but one wonders whether the views not only on love but also on socialism and war which Graves seems to have been developing at school may have been fired by Carpenter's books. If they were, then Graves's politics, and his admiration for Carpenter, may have suffered when Johnstone fell into disgrace and oblivion in 1917.

Readers hoping for more light on Graves in wartime than has hitherto been available may be a little disappointed. R. P. Graves rightly refrains from echoing the superb battle scenes in *Goodbye to All That*, which he recognizes to be as authentic in atmosphere as they are unreliable in matters of fact, but his quotation from Rupert Brooke and his comments on the Somme are hackneyed stuff. It would have been more useful to have considered Brooke as a Georgian influence on Graves's poetry, but what one really wants to know is how Graves understood the war while it was in progress. He thought it was men's work, insisted on returning to the trenches before his wound was healed, wrote poems describing Germany as a destroyer of civilization, and took a major part in silencing Sassoon's protest (he was helped in this by another rebel, Robert Ross, who incidentally deserves a more careful description than "literary journalist"). Yet Graves is often enlisted as one of those "war poets" who hated the war and protested against it, and there are comments in his letters which seem to support such a view. Plenty of manuscripts remain to be looked at, especially on the Sassoon affair, but the confusion may prove hard to resolve because Graves himself was deeply confused by his war experiences.

R. P. Graves sorts out many factual tangles, revealing as he does so the extent of his uncle's mental disorder in the ten years after 1916. Graves was more severely shell-shocked than has often been realized, several times coming to the edge of complete breakdown. In 1921 he sought advice from W. H. R. Rivers, Sassoon's wartime doctor, and for a while his theory and practice of poetry were based on Rivers's psychoanalytical theories. Rivers gets a few mentions in *The Assault Heroic* but scarcely more than that; here again the reader needs to be told about a guru's ideas and their impact. However, the book certainly makes one want to dig out Graves's work from the 1920s to enjoy its eccentricity and skill. The natural balance which enabled him to climb Harlech Castle in the dark was matched by an enviably subtle ear; the rhythms and phrasing of some of the poems quoted here are a delight. Now he has embarked for Cairo with his dotty but unexpectedly charming first wife, their four unruly children, a nanny and the mysterious Laura Gottschalk, a fateful new arrival. Volume Two will be worth reading.

Certainly not Caitlin Macnamara. The daughter of an improvident Anglo-Irish squire who abandoned his ladylike lesbian wife for a series of other women, she grew up in an atmosphere of faded gentility. Her mother neglected her schooling but filled her head with nonsense about marrying a duke and other petty snobberies which were to ensure that her later collision with homely West Wales would be bruising. Her father's desertion and rowdy love-making (he sang sea shanties while *in flagrante*) gave her a disgust for men that was confirmed when she was clumsily seduced by her neighbour, Augustus John. Meanwhile his son, Caspar, with whom she has remained infatuated throughout her life, resisted her advances and was consequently punished by losing both his legs. It is, she hints with grim satisfaction, a way God has with those indifferent to her frilly night-dresses, and suggests that the unfaithful Dylan's early death may be put down to the same agency.

That she and Dylan remained married for sixteen years is astonishing. The marriage-bed, as she never tires of reminding us, was less than ecstatic, while her cooking (she had a perpetual Irish stew on the go which would turn blue after a few weeks) sounds less than appetizing. Nor to this marriage of true impediments was mind admitted. She found all literary discussion "boring" and her especial spite is reserved for "bluestockings" like Pamela Hansford Johnson and Margaret Taylor who seemed to be able to get closer to her husband on these high-falutin topics. Dylan's attraction for her was that he thought she had "class", and that his performance in pubs made up for his performance in bed. Lacking the talent, humour or wit to become the centre of attraction, she could at least share the limelight through her more gifted husband. When family commitments began to interfere with this pursuit, she abandoned her infant son to her mother, left her second child alone night after night in blitz-torn London, and finally underwent an abortion at six months so that she



One of several photographs of Dylan and Caitlin Thomas reproduced from the book reviewed here.

could accompany Dylan to America "to give myself a bit of fun and enjoyment".

As it turned out, America gave the final kick to their tottering marriage. Of all her illusions the one she held to most desperately was that she alone could see this chameleon poet in his true colours, that only she had access to the "real" Dylan Thomas. There is no evidence in this book that she ever came close to him, but she began to suspect that American women had. The British class and educational systems made it easy for her to stereotype and dismiss the threats posed by Miss Johnson and Mrs Taylor, but America was a glamorous *terra incognita*, inhabited by sophisticated ladies of brains and determination who were everything that she pretended to be but had not the courage or intelligence to become. She realized that "these clever bluestocking ones were in his mind as well as his body, and I couldn't stand that" – but before she could do anything about it he died, leaving her rage unassuageable.

STUDIES IN MORAL, POLITICAL, AND LEGAL PHILOSOPHY ■ Marshall Cohen, Editor

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On the easy side

Peter Fowler

GLYN DANIEL
Some Small Harvest
448pp. Thames and Hudson. £12.95.
050001387 X

Here are the golden life and times of Glyn Daniel, youthful archaeological researcher, television pundit of the 1950s and 60s, teacher of royalty and those on their way to the glittering prizes, Disney Professor of Archaeology in the University of Cambridge 1974-81 and, throughout, devoted member of St John's College.

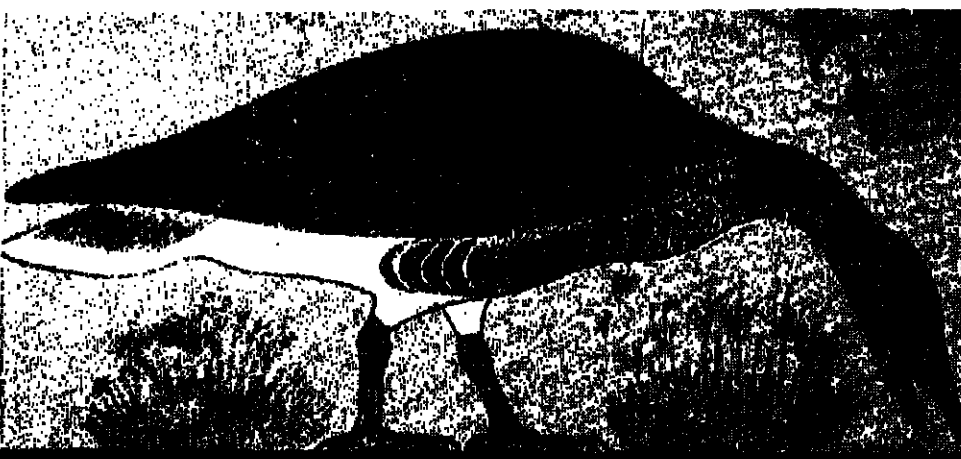
Professor Daniel sketches his life chronologically in the first six chapters and concludes with a final chapter on "The last decade 1974-84". In between are his memories of and reflections on such matters as "Writing and editing", "Megaliths and men" and "Friends and foes". It will doubtless be to this last chapter that his contemporaries will turn first. Critics of Daniel's way of life will seize gratefully not so much on his assessment of Sir Mortimer Wheeler as on his own honest guess at Wheeler's thoughts about himself:

He was jealous of the easy archaeological and general life I had had. No Puschendaele, in easy Second World War of "women's work", no grinding away at excavations, no slaving away at hideous excavation reports, no museum drudgery. It all seemed unfairly easy, an early College fellowship and a soft don's life in Cambridge.

In many ways these memoirs, with their deliberately disparaging title, encourage such a view. Daniel, however able in youth, was indeed lucky and he seized his opportunities, not least in getting to know the right people in

pre-war Cambridge. His early chapters are riddled with names of people who later became, as he is careful to ensure we know, Vice-Chancellor of this University, Professor of that -ology, or "distinguished" (one of his favourite adjectives) in public service. He may indeed have been "a very ordinary secondary-school boy from Wales who lapped up the magic of Cambridge" but he was lucky too in coming "into touch with real scholarship". By 1938, aged twenty-four, he was a Fellow of St John's; "and seemed to have plenty of money . . . The shadow of the next War was on many people; but not on me."

To those who do not share the author's obsessions with Cambridge, food and wine, Daniel's "easy Second World War" could have been an episode of considerable satisfaction. From quiet-flowing Cam, "baby don" - his own phrase - was snatched out of megalithic security to wartime Wembley and Delphi. But



A detail from an early Fourth Dynasty tomb of Nefermaat and his wife Iet at Maidum; it is taken from In the Shadow of the Pyramids: Egypt during the Old Kingdom by Jaromir Malek, with photographs by Werner Forman (128pp. Macdonald/Orbis. £15. 0 85613 963 3).

Restless endeavours

Jorge Calado

PETER MEDAWAR
Memoir of a Thinking Radish: An autobiography
209pp. Oxford University Press. £12.50.
0192177370
ALAN S. PARKES
Off-beat Biologist
485pp. The Galtion Foundation, 22
Newmarket Road, Cambridge CB5 8DT. £20.
0907232051

Confined to their laboratories, scientists seldom lead exciting lives and, as a result, their biographies make very dull reading. Sir Peter Medawar is well aware of this, as he shows in the choice of epigraphs, but he should not have worried; his autobiography is a delight. As one has come to expect from Medawar's books, it has a catchy title (an amalgam of Pascal's *roseau pensant* or thinking reed and Falstaff's forked radish), a breezy conversational style, and it is tantalisingly short. He has already confessed in *The Limits of Science* (1984) that he finds "nearly all books on nearly all subjects . . . much too long", and that his

favourite writings, from Descartes' *Discours de la méthode* to Burnet and Fenner's *The Production of Antibodies* are all very short, most of them no more than essays. Here the model is Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, hardly a short book, but *Memoir of a Thinking Radish* could also be easily described as a series of biographical sketches and opinions, with the narrative "confined . . . to those aspects of [his] life which seem . . . to throw some light on the human comedy or the human predicament - very often the same thing". This dislike of excessive length goes with his suspicion of pomposity, and, in fact, one of the recurring themes of this book is his denunciation of *snobism* in all its forms as the "English disease". He is adept, however, at using self-deprecation as a screen for his equally English reticence.

This is a book of opinions, brightened by generous enthusiasms. He developed early on a love of music and opera and an addition to the comic geniuses of the silent screen, and has remained an omnivorous reader whose tastes range from Bacon to Nietzsche. In a way this memoir is also the progress of a mind through a series of eye-opening books - among them G. H. Hardy's *A Course in Pure Mathematics* (but not, surprisingly, his other illuminating and short book, *A Mathematician's Apology*).

what happened? "To my delight and surprise we were allocated Hyderabad Palace", the "we" including two friends and outstanding archaeologists, professors-to-be Stuart Piggott and Terence Powell. So not much suffering there. During his "Indian interlude", 1942-6, Daniel was in air photographic intelligence, charged with training officers in interpretation and in setting up an operational unit to support the war effort in Burma. Raconteur, name-dropper, that he is, his passage on India is unsatisfying for leaving so much unsaid about how a young Cambridge archaeologist of South Welsh "yeoman" ("peasant" by the end of the book) stock actually tackled his officer's responsibilities in wartime in the last days of the British Raj. Even more frustratingly, one suspects that Wing-Commander Daniel did it rather well; if so, begone false modesty, and roll on the memoirs of Colonel Piggott.

Then back to the Backs, marriage, College

Stewardship, an assistant lectureship, authorship (fact, fiction and gastronomic), television fame, and a near-monopoly of archaeo-editorship in British publishing. His activity was tremendous, his output prodigious; yet all that is lightly touched on here: such a fund of little stories, so many friends (all except one, as we would now say, upwardly mobile), such success - and for us readers now, such entertainment. And if your enthusiasm for wine and food remotely approaches Glyn Daniel's, his is a truly verbal *dégustation*, as memorable meal after memorable meal is detailed in salivating recollection of menus across seventy years.

The general leader whose interest in archaeology Daniel has done so much to stimulate and inform during his entertaining life will forgive, I hope, an archaeological caveat to these memoirs. Perhaps more's the pity, but most archaeology today is not like that which Daniel has so enjoyed. In the past twenty years in particular, it has developed organizationally, technically, conceptually and ethically in ways which find no mirror in these memoirs. Professionalism, laboratory-based archaeology, landscape and theoretical archaeology, conservation archaeology - all are now in the mainstream of the subject at universities, major museums and in archaeologically responsible organizations from State to local level. It is no criticism of the book to remark their absence from it, for such is simply not the stuff of the archaeology in Daniel's life; today's archaeology should not be judged by these pages. Rather one should enjoy in them the pleasure, the wit, and the luck, of a man who, scholarly, urbane and with the self-confessed gift of the gab, was perhaps born to teach and to entertain and fortunately for us all, chanced to do so as an archaeologist.

A. J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* and Bertrand Russell's *The Principles of Mathematics*.

Medawar chose to read the right subject - zoology - in the right place, Oxford. The tolerance and flexibility of the Oxford system allowed his mind to grow unharnessed, following its own natural inclinations. And the choice of zoology took him in all directions, for it overlaps easily with all sorts of disciplines, from anthropology and demography to history and sociology. At Oxford he came under the influence of some great minds - his tutor, John Young, but also the formidable "Harry" Weldon, the Kantian philosopher. Sir Peter's acknowledged debt to, and admiration for people like these and, above all, Karl Popper and Ernst Gombrich, whom he rightly calls "two of the greatest modern Englishmen", run, like *Leitmotive*, through the book and are contagious and exhilarating. Although Medawar went through the motions of submitting a thesis for examination, he never supplicated for the award of a D Phil degree; thus remaining "a plain Mister until [he] became a Prof." This has not prevented him, however, from playing the alphabet game, with his list of doctorates *honoris causa* now stretching from Alberta to Washington, Seattle; as he observes ruefully, "Yale and Zimbabwe are unaccountably dragging their feet".

Eventually the Sunday bells of Oxford drove him to the chair of Zoology in Birmingham, and when his colleagues there made him Dean of Science he promptly took refuge in University College London, for he got no pleasure from the exercise of power. When he became director of the National Institute for Medical Research in 1962 he had long been a FRS (elected in 1949 at the age of thirty-four) and was already a Nobel laureate in Medicine or Physiology (sharing his portion of the prize money with his direct collaborators). Medawar's work on what he likes to call "the body's exquisite powers of discrimination between its own and other living cells" is the basis of modern immunology.

His has also been a life marked by personal tragedy. The victim of crippling strokes which left him, at the height of his intellectual powers, permanently disabled, he bravely fought back through the indignities and humiliations of rehabilitation centres, resumed his active research career and produced a series of short-

and exciting books. He keeps an exemplary detachment about these events. At one point he even balances the fearful effects of illness and tragedy with the liberating weeping triggered by moments of true glory, like the one in *Fidelio* when Leonore "draws a pistol on the wicked prison governor and distant trumpets from the prison tower announce the arrival . . . of justice . . . and freedom".

No practising scientist ever thinks of himself as old. Age does not kill or subdue the impulse to explore and understand, that Kantian "restless endeavour" to get at the truth of things which is the mark of a dedicated scientist. Sir Alan Parkes can easily join Medawar's list of biologists "on whose behalf all ordinary laws of mortality and even the physical intimations of it seemed to have been held in abeyance". At the age of eighty-one, having relinquished his last professional commission as consultant to the world's first sea-turtle farm on Grand Cayman Island, Parkes could look back with warm nostalgia on successes and failures and "take a bird's eye view of a large slice of time and change: six reigns, two world wars, carriage and pair to space craft, pen and ink to word processor and magic lantern to video".

Parkes's is a distinguished career - FRS at thirty-two, over twenty-five years of productive research at the NIMR, first Mary Marshall Professor of Physiology of Reproduction in Cambridge, membership of the Advisory Committee on Medical Research of the World Health Organisation, etc. Like any other first-rate scientist he met and worked with some outstanding people; and thus experienced the synergism of two minds working together towards the solution of a problem. We are told of all this in a light-hearted, often amusing way in *Off-beat Biologist*, but by the end of its 450-odd pages we are left with the impression that we have learned everything that we ever wanted to know and much more that we need not have known. The book comes complete with lists of abbreviations, references, appendices and several indexes.

Professor Parkes seems, however, to over-stress the part played by luck in his career, ignoring Fontenelle's remark that "the strokes of good fortune are only for those who play well". In a scientist's life the instances of bad luck are probably matched by those of good luck. The difference is that discoverers not made leave no trace.

Right of entry

Mary Lefkowitz

BARBARA MILLER SOLOMON
In the Company of Educated Women: A history of women and higher education in America
288pp. Yale University Press. £10.95.
0300036396

A visitor to Harvard today would find it hard to believe that not twenty-five years ago women could not obtain a degree from that university. Instead they were educated (although by the same faculty) at Radcliffe College, a co-ordinate but separate foundation that was first known simply as "the Annex". Other universities had admitted women since the mid-nineteenth century, but almost always in smaller numbers than men, and outside the classroom the sexes were kept strictly segregated. Barbara Miller Solomon patiently documents the slow but steady process by which women came to gain the right to the same kind of formal education, financial support, and university living conditions as men. It is a characteristically American story of the excluded group that through hard work, real achievement, and appeal to common sense, eventually manages - at least on the surface - to be accepted.

The first women to be educated in America were primarily white, Protestant, and from families that could afford to educate daughters

as well as sons. The First World War brought greater social freedom (and demands for dances and longer visiting hours), but with it the need for formal instruction in the facts of life in special "Hygiene" courses. Since the elite private universities reflected the social values of their founders and benefactors, most of them achieved real ethnic diversity only in the wake of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s, by including for the first time more than a small fixed ratio of Jews, along with significant numbers of Catholics and blacks.

Women were not always taken seriously by their instructors. M. Carey Thomas, the formidable founder of Bryn Mawr, wrote in 1875 of her undergraduate experience at Cornell that "there is very much that is hard for a lady at a mixed university; and I would not subject any girl to it unless she were determined to have it". A generation later Woodrow Wilson was still "embarrassed" by being required to teach women at Bryn Mawr. Special subjects were devised that women students might eventually put to practical use in family life, like home economics and child psychology. Once the women left the comparatively welcoming environment of the university, they were required to make serious choices. Having a career meant (with a few notable exceptions) remaining single or at least not having children. In addition, women were primarily encouraged to enter the "caring" professions, like teaching and nursing. University teaching, except at the women's colleges and in subjects

like home economics, was generally closed to them; they were not admitted to the best medical schools. Although it had been feared in the early days that educating women would bring about "race suicide", the majority of female graduates chose to become wives and mothers, to work in partnership with their husbands, and to make their contributions to social and cultural causes as volunteers.

Even in recent years women graduates have continued to receive ambiguous messages about their futures from educators as well as from employers. Although they are encouraged to enter the most demanding professions, it is often assumed (but regretted) that their careers will be awkwardly punctuated by child-bearing and moving to follow their husbands, and that solutions to these problems, like asking the men to make similar compromises, are not always acceptable or practical. Significantly, the prestigious universities that now pride themselves on admitting women students appear to be less than eager to have them as colleagues; in the country as a whole, for the past fifty years the percentage of women faculty has remained the same, although the percentage of women with doctorates has doubled.

By contrast, the women's colleges have always sought to have their undergraduates educated by a high proportion of women faculty. Solomon, however, claims that it makes no difference whether a woman's mentor is male or female. She doubts that the women's colleges have provided greater support for their

women students than the coeducational schools, and suggests that they can now offer women only a "different, diluted collegiate experience". Certainly the numbers of women attending the women's colleges have steadily declined, and some of the old women's colleges, like Vassar and Connecticut, have become coeducational.

But one may well ask whether without the women's colleges women would ever have been able to convince the prestigious male institutions that they deserved the same treatment and opportunities as male students. Although male educators had warned that women's bodies might be damaged by Greek, higher mathematics, and strenuous physical exercise, from the start the women's colleges offered their undergraduates virtually the same kinds of courses that were offered to their contemporaries at the all-male preserves of the Ivy League; they were equally or even more demanding in the academic standards they set for their undergraduates. Women students at these institutions have had opportunities to value the company of other women, and to see them assume positions of leadership ordinarily denied them in coeducational settings. Even if not every student has been helped and encouraged by her women instructors, she will have learned from them that women are not only able to earn doctoral degrees, but can effectively teach and write about all the standard subjects. What for her appears routine is still exceptional at universities like Harvard.

The grievances of academe

Joel Conarroe

HOWARD R. BOWEN and JACK H. SCHUSTER
American Professors: A national resource imperiled
322pp. Oxford University Press. £22.50.
019030693 X

Statistics can be disquieting. Of the young Americans who studied in Great Britain as Rhodes Scholars between 1950 and 1954, 50 per cent became faculty members in institutions of higher learning. Between 1975 and 1977, however, only 20 per cent who held the prestigious scholarships chose academic careers. As for membership in Phi Beta Kappa, another indicator of classroom distinction, the figures for these periods also show precipitous declines - from 23 per cent to 5 per cent. Small wonder then that there has been so much talk during the past decade about the possibility of a lost generation of scholars. If the best and the brightest are not choosing careers in universities and colleges, what will become of the American faculties by the end of the century? It is clear that unless something is done to attract unusually gifted students into teaching careers, higher education - and hence countless other aspects of American life - is destined to fall into disarray.

Long march from Marx

Daniel J. Singal

HOWARD BRICK
Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism: Social theory and political reconciliation in the 1940s
280pp. University of Wisconsin Press. \$30.
0299105504

The generation of American intellectuals which came of age during the 1930s has become a topic of great interest lately, not only because of the unusual talent to be found in its ranks, but more especially because of the conspicuous political movement from left to right that so many of its members have made during their careers. Starting out typically as Depression-era radicals, by the 1950s the majority had moved close to the political centre. Two decades later, a sizeable contingent, now known as "neo-conservatives", had migrated all the way to the outer precincts of Reaganism. What, recent historians have asked, accounts for this dramatic shift?

To answer this question, Howard Brick focuses on the process by which one prominent writer, the sociologist Daniel Bell, became "deradicalized" during the 1940s. Tracing the course of Bell's thought in minute detail, and paying close attention to the influence of major political and economic changes, *Daniel Bell and the Decline of Intellectual Radicalism* provides the best treatment to date of the long journey of Bell's remarkable generation, even though Bell himself was to stop just left of centre.

In essence, Brick sees Bell as pinning his early hopes on an impossibility - the development of a Marxist-oriented labour movement in the United States that would use its political muscle to bring about a planned society based on a high-minded conception of the public interest. According to this vision, the managed capitalist economy that had emerged during the New Deal and Second World War would naturally evolve into democratic socialism. It was to be a gentle revolution, accomplished through the ballot-box, and guided by those intellectuals who, like Bell himself, were

awarded tenure and promotion to Associate

Professors have all been women. They have helped to change a good but conventional department into one of the strongest and liveliest in the country. Some institutions, especially in the South and Southwest, are still very traditional, but for the most part women are finally able to compete on an equal basis with their male colleagues. And their visibility, moreover, is increasing. In the past fifteen years the number of PhDs awarded to men has declined by some 4,700 (a decrease of 18 per cent) while those earned by women have shot up by 8,400 - an increase of 212 per cent.

The book also highlights the welcome news that the projected pattern of retirements between now and the end of the century assures a future for young teacher-scholars once again. A recent headline in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* announced, "Promising Young Scholars Now in Demand for Academic Jobs". For the first time in years, faculty members can have a clear conscience about encouraging their brightest students to consider academic careers. It is up to those who can enhance the attractiveness of academic life - administrators, federal and state legislators, alumni donors - to determine the quality of this pool of new scholars. As the authors put it:

Whether in the future the professoriate will attract

and hold its share of talent, ranging from the marginal to the most gifted, depends on the conditions and remuneration in the profession. If over a period of years these are not competitive, colleges and universities will not attract their share of the best talent and will be forced to operate with faculties of relatively marginal abilities.

Unfortunately Bowen and Schuster do not make entirely clear to whom these and similar hortatory sentiments are directed. The audience they have in mind apparently knows nothing about the academy, having to be told that faculties engage in "the ramified endeavours we call 'research'", that "older faculty draw larger salaries than younger faculty", and that some teachers "drop out for reasons of illness or death". And yet probably only those who are intimate with and concerned about the state of higher education will have the patience to work through the graphs, charts and statistics that interrupt the flow of the book's prose, though "flow" does not exactly describe the language that is academic in the world's least inviting sense - wooden, graceless, repetitious. Nevertheless, Howard Bowen and Jack Schuster are among the few students of contemporary higher education who make (and document) the crucial point that prevailing conditions, largely economic, and not the professoriate itself, account for the imperilled state of an essential resource.

Whether in the future the professoriate will attract

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to pursue moral ends in politics, such a concern with morality frequently led to isolation from the political mainstream, where pragmatic compromise was the order of the day. Caught in the coils of this analysis, and seeing no means of effective political action open to him, Bell had "nowhere to go - but toward reconciliation with what was given and inescapable". Hence his grudging embrace of capitalism and proclamation of "the end of ideology".

It is clear that Brick views the deradicalization of Daniel Bell as a precipitous slide from grace, but one might fairly ask how accurate an assessment that is. Perhaps the best way to comprehend the post-war United States is in terms of unresolvable tensions; perhaps we do need to map and explain the striking contradictions and "disjunctions" (Bell's favourite word) before framing new plans for political action. If so, what Brick has really charted may be Bell's progress from sectarian writer to professional scholar, from (as Bell himself once put it) "a vulgar Marxist framework" to "a greater awareness or feeling for the actual operational structures of the society".

The English Centre of P.E.N., in partnership with Quartet, will be publishing a poetry anthology, P.E.N. NEW POETRY II, which will be edited by Elaine Feinstein and appear in Spring 1988. The aim, as always with P.E.N. Anthologies, is to encourage new writers, so that approximately one-third of the volume will be devoted to well-known writers and two-thirds to the work of the new or the less well-known.

THE P.E.N. ANTHOLOGIES

Previously unpublished poems (not more than three per person) written in English by living writers of British nationality (or those long resident here) should be sent to The Editor, P.E.N. NEW POETRY II, The English Centre of P.E.N., 7 Dilly Street, London SW3 4LE, by January 31st, 1987.

Poems must be typewritten, have the writer's name and address on the title page, and should not exceed sixty lines. A biography of not more than six lines should accompany all entries. No acknowledgements will be sent and poems will not be returned. No correspondence will be entered into.

We hope to publish another short story anthology in Spring 1989, but will not require contributions until January 1988.

QUARTET BOOKS

Subduing the wilde salvages

James Axtell

PHILIP L. BARBOUR (Editor)
The Complete Works of Captain John Smith
1580-1631
Three volumes. 448pp, 484pp and 513pp.
University of North Carolina Press. £150 the set.
08078 1525 X

American history, wrote Bernard DeVoto, "is the most romantic of all histories. It began in myth and has developed through centuries of fairy stories . . . Ours is a story mad with the impossible . . . it began as dream and it has continued as dream . . ." One of its earliest and most persistent dreamers was the son of a Lincolnshire yeoman who, after cutting a swathe through the battlefields of eastern and western Europe, threw himself into the creation of England's first American colonies.

And yet, due to various accidents, Captain John Smith spent less than three years in America, during his late twenties and mid-thirties. Until he died a bachelor at fifty-one, he sought in vain and with some vanity to return to command in Virginia or New England, which he regarded as his surrogate family. Frustrated by events, he wielded his decreasingly "rough pen" in their honour, publishing thirteen books and pamphlets of advice, annals, and adventure. One of his enduring legacies to the romance of America is the yoking of his name with that of the frisky Indian "princess", Pocahontas. But as this definitive new edition of his works makes clear, he should be remembered for much else.

The future governor of Virginia and "Admiral of New England" was born inauspiciously in 1580 and was educated at local schools until he was apprenticed at fifteen to a merchant. But like many landlocked boys of his day, his mind teemed with notions of life at sea, perhaps relieving Spanish *flotas* of their treasure and certainly keeping armadas from English shores. After a tedious year behind the counter, he slid out of his apprenticeship and signed on instead as a soldier in the Netherlands. For the next four years he careered around western Europe, acquiring high-born sponsors, expertise in the saddle and the latest techniques of war, and a smattering of languages.

Exemplary Americans

Hennig Cohen

KENNETH SILVERMAN
The Life and Times of Cotton Mather
479pp. Harper and Row. £25.50.
0060152311
ALAN HEIMERT and ANDREW DELBANCO
The Puritans in America
438pp. Harvard University Press. £22.75
(paperback, £7.25).
0 674 74065 3
STEPHEN FENDER
American Literature in Context 1620-1830
209pp. Methuen. Paperback, £5.95.
0416745903

When Cotton Mather, DD (Glas), FRS, the last of the first New England Puritans, published his *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), New England was no longer new. It had grown older, was less English and more American, and was drifting from the ways of its patriarchs. In this account of the great works of Christ in America, Mather resurrected the saints and heroes of the past as examples to the present. "I'll show them, the *Graves* of their *dead Fathers*", he wrote, "that *Greatness*, and that *Goodness*, which was in the *Grain*." Along with much else, his monumental tome includes some fifty biographies of New England worthies.

Notable among them are his lives of John Winthrop, the first and oft-times governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony; the Revd John Eliot, apostle to the Indians; and Sir William Phips, the first royal governor. His subjects were not simply renowned for their grace and

Before he turned twenty-one, this Protestant farmer's son enlisted in the Catholic armies of the Holy Roman Empire, which were seeking to halt the Ottoman advance in eastern Europe. For the next three years his *True Travels* (published in 1630) read like a picaresque novel. In short order he was made a captain of 250 horse for implementing a life-saving signal system and employing various pyrotechnical devices with shocking effectiveness. During a dull interlude in a siege, he responded to the challenge of three successive Turkish cavalymen to single combat. Smith's Transylvanian prince thereupon awarded him a gentleman's right to a coat of arms featuring the three 'Turks' heads he had severed.

Later he was captured, sold as a slave, and sent to his master's young Greek mistress in Constantinople. Whether out of love or compassion, the Lady Tragabigzanda sent him to her brother's fief on the northern fringe of the empire to become a good Turk, perhaps with an eye to future marriage. There he soon bashed in the head of his sadistic master and fled into the wilds of Muscovy, where another female benefactor, the wife of an outpost commander, befriended him and sent him back to freedom with supplies and a passport. By the time he made his way back to England, he had collected 1,500 ducats of gold as a bonus from his imperial employers, made a grand tour of western Europe, and been drawn into piracy off the coast of Africa.

From the late nineteenth century, Smith's version of his adventures in the Balkans aroused the suspicions of several critics, among them Henry Adams, who thought they detected in his frank immodesty and understandable exaggeration the marks of outright invention. They were wrong. Since the 1950s, when qualified scholars began to scrutinize his pre-American career, nothing has been found to discredit the essential truth of anything he wrote. The same is true for the remainder of his experiences, which gives his works unusual value as historical sources.

"The Warres in Europe, Asia, and Africa, taught me how to subdue the wilde Salvages in Virginia and New-England", he later wrote with considerable truth. Yet Smith never treated the American natives as viciously as he had the Turkish "infidels". One reason is that his American agenda was different. In Europe he was a hired gun bent on obliterating Muslim invaders. In Virginia he was, after his rivals

among the original seven-member Council had died or departed, governor of a colony the most serious threats to which were starvation and the understandable hostility of the native proprietors of the land. To solve the second problem was to solve the first, for the thirty tribes that comprised the powerful Powhatan Confederacy grew corn in abundance.

Keen ethnographer that he was, Smith saw that the Indians had to be strong-armed into leaving the struggling colony at Jamestown alone but cajoled periodically into trade for food. Novel trade goods, particularly blue beads and copper, helped to secure the trade, and Smith's martial prowess and raw courage did the rest. He gained valuable insights into native psychology during his famous captivity of three weeks in December 1607. It was then that he also earned the protection if not affection of Pocahontas, the "emperor's" eleven or twelve-year-old daughter. Thereafter she risked her reputation and perhaps her life to succour the intruders with food and warnings of impending attack. Her marriage to the widower John Rolfe, baptism in the Anglican Church, and "royal" progress to England symbolized her alienation from her native culture, a process that may have begun at Smith's hand in captivity as he described the known universe and the minor miracles of European technology.

The problems Smith faced in Virginia were monumental and he did the best of any of the early governors to solve them. No man could cope completely with venomous factions, Indian raids, appalling mortality from disease, polluted water, and despair, treason, official engrossment of supplies, a superfluity of light-fingered gentlemen, a parent company hell-bent on profit, and the colonists' febrile quest for gold. But before he was sent home with a serious powder burn in 1609, Smith had, during his one-year reign, managed to cow the Powhatans, whip the colonists into martial and economic shape, and keep them reasonably healthy and well fed. For this he earned the jealous enmity of higher-born rivals such as George Percy, who dismissed him as "an Ambitious, unworthy and vayne-glorious fellow".

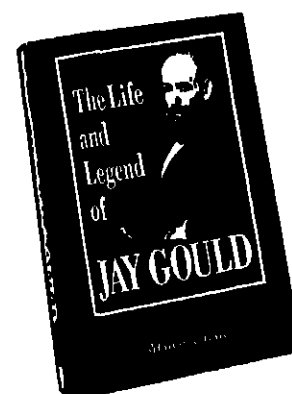
Smith turned next to New England, which he named during his only voyage to the region in 1615. After five months he returned laden with fish and furs, the most accurate map of the New England coast to date, and sharp observations

on its geography, native populations, and economic potential. These he published the following year in *A Description of New England*, just as he had celebrated the southern colony in *A Map of Virginia* in 1612. Three subsequent voyages were aborted by contrary winds, pirates, and broken masts, and the "Admiral" never returned to America. When the coast of New England and "Acadia" was allotted to twenty colonial entrepreneurs in 1621, Smith received only a group of barren rocks off the coast of New Hampshire, known as Smith's Isles. He must have wondered whether his deep investment in the American colonies had been misplaced, for as he wrote soon after, they had been not only his "children" but "my wife, my hawks, my hounds, my cards, my dice".

That they were worthy of his attention—and he of ours—was never in doubt for Philip Barbour, the editor of this excellent and elegantly produced edition. Before his death in 1980 at eighty-two, Barbour had been a student of languages, journalist, broadcaster, intelligence officer, and in military government, before retiring to write *The Three Worlds of Captain John Smith* (1964) and *Pocahontas and Her World* (1970) and to edit *The Jamestown Voyages under the First Charter, 1606-1609* for the Hakluyt Society (1969). In 1969 plans were laid for a new edition of Smith's works to replace the accurate but incomplete and unannotated 1884 edition by Edward Arber, and Barbour was the obvious choice as editor.

He has given us everything we might expect in a modern scholarly edition, and occasionally a bit more. The texts are carefully reconstructed, emended, introduced, and annotated. Chronologies of historical events, a biographical directory of 189 persons, reproductions of maps, documents, and title-pages, formal bibliographical notes, and a brief biography of Smith are included, as are a 41-page bibliography by David Quinn and an excellent 79-page index by Alison Quinn. But some of the notes have a pedantic killer. We do not need to know that the *thorn* is still used in modern Icelandic (in a note on editorial method) or that the rhyming farmer Thomas Tusser died in debtor's prison (in a note on turkeys). As in previous works, Barbour displays some of the autodidact's eccentricities. Yet our gratitude to him for his long labour of love is immense.

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John Coyle

Jungle-bashers

John Hemming

JOHN URE
Trespassers on the Amazon
175pp. Constable. £10.95.
019 4643001

The Amazon is by far the world's largest river, with one-fifth of the volume of water of all rivers on this planet. It is also one of the most daunting terrains, with two-thirds of the world's tropical rain-forests and a population as sparse as the Sahara's.

Such a mighty river attracts only a few hardy adventurers, but those who brave it tend to be larger than life. John Ure, the present British ambassador to Brazil, describes some twenty British and Americans who have penetrated this exotic region. He rightly calls his book *Trespassers on the Amazon* because most of his characters made only brief visits and left a minimal impression on the immense brown waters and limitless tangle of vegetation; and because the Amazon had been largely neglected by Anglo-Sixons: the great explorations there were made by its Spanish and Portuguese colonists, and the Germans and French were more active as anthropologists, scientists and artists. But within his chosen limits, Mr Ure has assembled a wonderfully entertaining cast of characters. His speculators, naturalists, exploiters and eccentrics were as flamboyant as the jungles they visited.

The first British contact with the Amazon consisted of short-lived attempts at colonization in the early seventeenth century. Sir Walter Raleigh had inspired these settlements by his glimpse of the lower Orinoco and his famous essay "The Large, Rich and Bewildful Empire of Guiana" — a piece of propaganda more exaggerated than the most flagrant travel agent's hyperbole. The most engaging of the colonists was Bernard O'Brien, son of a Catholic Irish earl, who won the friendship of Amerindian tribes and explored many Amazonian rivers.

The Portuguese had been established farther south in Brazil for almost a century and, although only recently arrived on the Amazon, determined to expel the European colonists. This they did with ruthless efficiency. Having fought off these and other rivals, they kept Brazil tightly closed to all foreigners for two centuries. Even Captain Cook and Alexander von Humboldt were denied permission to enter. It was only after the Portuguese court moved to Rio de Janeiro during the Napoleonic wars, and Brazil became an independent empire in 1822, that the Amazon was opened to curious Europeans and Americans. Ure's narrative therefore jumps to the 1850s, when three splendid English naturalists went to collect some of Amazonia's profusion of flora and fauna. Henry Bates (my predecessor as the first paid Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society), Alfred Wallace and Richard Spruce were all dedicated, modest men, fine scientists, friends of Darwin, and authors of vivid descriptions of the Amazon.



A detail from one of Gertrude Blom's photographs of Lacandon Mayans; it is taken from Gertrude Blom — Bearing Witness, edited by Alex Harris and Margaret Sartor (150pp. University of North Carolina Press. £30.40. 08078 15977).

These were the most likeable and admirable of Ure's trespassers.

From about 1860 to 1910 Amazonia was transformed by the rubber boom: the region enjoyed a monopoly of rubber during the decades when a series of inventions created huge demand for it in the industrial world. Various characters in this book were lured by the wealth created by the boom. Henry Wickham, instigated by the RGS and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, spirited a shipload of rubber seedlings out of the Amazon, thus creating the Malayan plantations that were to kill Amazonia's monopoly. The dashing American, Colonel Church, lost a fortune and many hundreds of lives trying to build a railway for rubber extraction in the heart of the jungle. Roger Casement, investigated horrific abuse of tribal Indians on rubber estates: Ure explains how Casement jeopardized his investigation by indulging his homosexuality —

although he does not mention that Casement purchased two Indian boys. Lastly, even the great Henry Ford suffered the only failure of his life when he tried to grow plantation rubber in Brazil.

The final part of this short book deals with twentieth-century explorers, most of whom went to Brazil for adventure. The ex-President of the United States, Theodore Roosevelt, asked the Brazilians to organize a safari for him, but ended up on a formidable expedition of pure discovery down a river that now bears his name. This tough adventure cost several lives, almost including Roosevelt's own. In 1925 the crazy English Colonel, Percy Fawcett, took two young men on a search for a legendary "lost city" in a part of Amazonia that had been visited frequently by Brazilians and Germans during the previous forty years. Fawcett's party vanished on this ludicrous attempt; but it gave rise to many search expeditions.

One of the most inept of these was described in Peter Fleming's *Brazilian Adventure*, justly famous as the first book to send up the mystique of explorers' derring-do. Ure ends with descriptions of post-war expeditions, and an epilogue on his own recent travels.

Trespassers on the Amazon is a lively and fast-moving book, easy and highly enjoyable to read. Ure condenses a series of narratives with practised Foreign Office concision. Most of the facts are derived from well-known works in English, but there is fresh material on Casement's Putumayo investigation, on the Swiss trapper Stefano Rattin's alleged sighting of Fawcett alive in an Indian tribe seven years after his disappearance, and on the background squabbles to Peter Fleming's search for him. My only complaint is sloppiness over Portuguese, Spanish and native words — I counted no fewer than twenty-seven misspellings and tribal names.

A don in London

Nigel Glendinning

PEDRO ORTIZ ARMENGOL
El año que viví Moratín en Inglaterra 1792-1793
416pp, plus 49 plates. Madrid: Castalia.
84 7039 461 4

Travel books by foreigners about England are rare, and those by Spaniards rarer. Perhaps there is little encouragement for them. Certainly the English do not want to see themselves as others see them. Indeed, foreigners writing about England need to beware, as Hawthorne discovered. The self-conceit of the English, he declared, "can accept nothing short of indiscriminate adulation".

Pedro Ortiz Armengol has not, it would seem, read Hawthorne on this subject, and he thinks that an eighteenth-century Spanish dramatist's experiences when living in London in

1792 and 1793, and his reflections on English life and manners, are worth retelling. Since the dramatist in question is the Spanish Molière, Leandro Fernández de Moratín, a witty observer of human conduct, equally at home with men of substance and women of easy virtue, Sr Ortiz is right to produce this book. There is no lack of perception and pleasure in it.

The main story-line is taken by Ortiz from Moratín's day-by-day account of his activities in England in his *Diary*, which he kept in an abbreviated mixture of five languages — Spanish, French, Italian, English and Latin. Moratín's *Notes on England* are sensibly exploited for additional comments, as are the dramatist's letters. Ortiz clarifies the relationship between the *Diary* and the *Notes*; he also clears up some of the linguistic puzzles and English references unsolved by Robert Johnson or René and Mireille Andioc. Not quite everyone mentioned in the *Diary* from the English journey can yet be identified, and the antecedents of dubious ladies like Maria ("Maraya" in Moratín's phonetic spelling) remain in decent obscurity. But Ortiz has a zest for research and he is admirably persistent in following up leads. There are some shrewd assessments of Moratín's opinions.

Between them Ortiz and Moratín bring sections of eighteenth-century London and its society to life. There are visits to the theatre, with critical comments on Shakespeare from Moratín and some interesting observations on audience response. Moratín goes to St Paul's Cathedral for the view, the British Museum for books, and the Crown and Anchor (headquarters of the Anti-Leveller Society) for a debate on freedom of the press. Outside the capital there are coach journeys to Portsmouth and Southampton, and a drawing of the eight-wheeled, boat-shaped vehicle that conveyed the travellers.

Moratín admired the way the English organized charity and assisted the poor, and was delighted by British caricatures and their uninhibited assaults on the Prince of Wales and Mrs Fitz-Jerbert. He did not approve of the busy way in which Britons walk the streets, with no thought for other pedestrians; was repelled by the large feet of English ladies

amazed by the machinery required for the tea ceremony; ironic about English claims to restraint in religious matters; and firm in his criticism of English complacency about toleration and the political constitution.

Ortiz gives his views of the English scene too: the unforgiving character of Guy Fawkes night celebrations; the uncivilized use of chamber-pots in eighteenth-century dining-rooms; the prurient exploitation of sexual matters in the English press. Ortiz, like Moratín, seasons his comments with wit but is a little obsessive about some points. He feels, for instance, that the deplorable English habit of adding hot water to everything, starting with tea-leaves, and culling it cooking, leads inevitably to a ready acceptance of degraded modern products like quick-frozen or dehydrated foods.

But English and Spanish people alike should be grateful to Ortiz for putting this book together. As a result of his research we know far more about Moratín's stay in London than was previously known; more too about the text of the *Apuntes sobre sueltes juglares*. Moratín's *Notes* deserve to be better known. Furthermore, Ortiz has searched out, and himself supplied when necessary, admirable illustrations for his text. The book is handsomely produced, slightly idiosyncratic — Ortiz himself would say poetic — enjoyable, informative, and sometimes acute about English behaviour in the eighteenth century and now.

Finally, here are three enigmas from the book, and from Moratín's *Diary*, that are still in need of solution. First, what is the meaning of the phrase — mixed languages, though mostly Latin in this case — "disputatio super cunnis: iratus quia valde cher"? The Andioc solution was that *cunnus* is *cuneus* and refers to stamps or medals and not private parts. But Ortiz is not so sure. Then, what was the "Máquina de Pandaemonium" that Moratín found desirable when he went to see it or hear it on March 12, 1793, in the Strand or near it? Finally, a puzzle, for seamen from February 17, 1793: "Lugo dixit insurrección de Marins (turtulas)". Did Moratín's friend Lugo say the sailors rowed hard (from *insurgere remis*), did they turn turtle or did they go turtle-hunting? No prizes.

Keeping out the foreigners

James McMullen

ROY ANDREW MILLER
Nihongo: In defence of Japanese
262pp. Athlone. £25.
0485 11251 5

There is a scholarly mentality that combines empirical rigour in the field of its expertise with aggressive, reactionary and often ahistorical reflexes towards peripheral fields where its own certainties may not prevail. In the Japanese tradition, the best exemplar of this phenomenon is the great philologist Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), who combined a rigorous approach to the study of ancient texts with a strident chauvinism and a polemical desire to rid Japan of Chinese influence at many levels of cultural life, including the linguistic. He has, as a result, an ambivalent standing in the cultural tradition as a whole.

Roy Andrew Miller, the best-known scholar of Japanese linguistics in the West, has unfortunately much in common with his famous predecessor. Like Motoori, Professor Miller is a rigorous and empirical student of the Japanese language. His particular field is comparative

linguistics, where his major work, *Japanese and the Other Altaic Languages* (1971), brilliantly documented the Altaic affinities of Japanese. But his linguistic odyssey over the Trans-Caspian steppe in search of Altaic etymologies seemed to leave him dispirited and irritable. His reviews and articles became increasingly truculent. In *Origins of the Japanese Language* (1980), he denounced the insularity of Japanese linguistic scholarship; a little later, *Japan's Modern Myth* (1982) indicted a whole sociolinguistic culture. By this declension, scorn for the work of his colleagues, Japanese and Western, has become a way of life.

Despite its title, therefore, *Nihongo: In defence of Japanese* attacks rather than defends. Its basic arguments are easily summarized. Miller is a nominalist, and by linguistic persuasion a "descriptive structuralist", an admirer of Bernard Bloch (1907-65). He is angered by the attempts on the part of pre-war Japanese grammarians, those "melancholy knights in borrowed armour", to analyse Japanese in categories derived from Indo-European languages. Their post-war successors, the transformational-generative school, "Chomsky's over-literal epigones", fare no better.

Once heard in Anatolia

John A. C. Greppin

MARGARITA L. KHACHIKYAN
Khurtskij Uratskij Jazyk
190pp. Yerevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences. R1.80.

This study of the Hurrian and Urartian languages, cognate systems spoken during the second and first millennia BC in ancient Anatolia, is an impressive state-of-the-art report. Work on Urartian extends back to the late nineteenth century in Russia, while Hurrian has largely surfaced through our Hittite records and serious work has been done since the 1920s. Hurrian has been well studied in the West, the best dictionary of the language having been written by the French specialist Emmanuel Laroche; Urartian has always been the bailiwick of the Russians, Armenians and Georgians. M. L. Khachikyan's splendid monograph thus continues a fine tradition, one for which she expresses her gratitude through copious reference to earlier scholarship.

Hurrian, the language of the biblical Hittites, is recorded in a syllabic cuneiform script similar to that used for Akkadian and Hittite, and was spoken in what is now south-eastern Turkey and the contiguous areas of Iraq and Syria; it passed from the historical scene about 1400 BC. A kindred tongue, Urartian, arose in the ninth century BC, principally in the area around Lake Van, and expired near 700 BC, the victim of rampaging Scythians. The vacuum created by its demise (the Scythians were nomadic and passed quickly from the scene) was filled by the historical Armenians.

Hurrian and Urartian are typologically similar to the existing languages of the Caucasus Mountains, languages such as Georgian, and a multitude of lesser tongues: Lak, Dargwa, Udi and Lezgian, for example. Hurrian and Urartian have short roots to which are added, in an agglutinative fashion, suffixes, often many at a time. And they are both languages showing the ergative, a syntactic case that has achieved an extraordinary popularity in the West with the rise of syntactic studies generated by the Chomskian revolution. The ergative is of interest since it is part of a system that expresses subject and object in a fashion entirely different from the Indo-European languages. In the Hurrian-Urartian system, the subject of a transitive verb is not expressed in the nominative case, but in something called the ergative, while the object of that verb, and the subject of an intransitive verb, fall into one and the same case, the absolutive.

Though we are fairly confident of the sound patterns of Akkadian, an ancient Semitic language with a script very similar to Hurrian and Urartian, we cannot be entirely sure that the symbols Hurrian and Urartian use have precisely the same phonetic value as in Akkadian. This is revealed through parallel systems of transliteration, especially of ancient place-names which are known in both Urartian and

linguistics, where his major work, *Japanese and the Other Altaic Languages* (1971), brilliantly documented the Altaic affinities of Japanese. But his linguistic odyssey over the Trans-Caspian steppe in search of Altaic etymologies seemed to leave him dispirited and irritable. His reviews and articles became increasingly truculent. In *Origins of the Japanese Language* (1980), he denounced the insularity of Japanese linguistic scholarship; a little later, *Japan's Modern Myth* (1982) indicted a whole sociolinguistic culture. By this declension, scorn for the work of his colleagues, Japanese and Western, has become a way of life.

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The affiliation of Hurrian and Urartian with any other language is a tricky question. Much Soviet effort has gone to show that they can be related to those of the eastern Caucasus, which is certainly logical. It is likely that the small languages now spoken in the Caucasian Mountains were once part of a larger system that extended down into Mesopotamia, and were eventually pushed back into their present fastness by the vigour of the Assyrians and the Persians. It is posited that Urartian and Hurrian were part of this system, and the typology of these two languages is indeed very similar to the living language found today in the Caucasus. The Leningrad orientalist Igor Diakonoff has made the most recent systematic effort to posit a relationship, arguing that Hurrian and Urartian had living cognates in such languages as Lak, Avar, Andi, Lezgian and others. Considerable debate followed on this hypothesis, but the conclusion, accepted now by most, was that Diakonoff's theory was not adequately proven. He was using vocabulary two or three thousand years old, and comparing it to contemporary words. He could not compare it to a hypothetical proto-East Caucasian since that system has yet to be fully established. So, judgment must be postponed. Showing a respect uncommon among Western linguists, Khachikyan wholly avoids mention of the problem.

But we do know that there remains Hurrian and Urartian loan vocabulary in Armenian. Such words as Hurrian *hinzur* and Armenian *khuzor* "apple" are obvious pairs, as are Urartian *ulu* and Armenian *ul* "camel". What we do not know is whether Armenian derived these words (of which there are a few dozen pairings) from Hurrian, or from Urartian, or from both. An Urartian origin is the most logical since the Armenians replaced the Urartians in the Lake Van region. Yet a conquering tribe will rarely borrow significant amounts of speech from the people it has vanquished. It is possible that the Armenians took words directly from the Hurrians in the second millennium, for the Hurrian people surely lived in an area where the proto-Armenians are also likely to have lived. Yet, for words that came into Armenian at such an early date, we would expect a greater amount of phonetic deviation. These words, if Hurrian, are bafflingly close in form and meaning: an unusual complaint.

But whatever the ancient relationships of Hurrian and Urartian, and whatever the source from which the Armenians took their loan-words, the study of these two ancient cuneiform tongues is one of the pleasures of linguistic paleontology.

ance that on *kuimono* (food), are suspect. He castigates Ivan Morris for reducing a passage of the early eleventh-century *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) to "childish gibberish" in a literal translation intended to illustrate the vagueness of the Japanese of that period. But it is not difficult to find blemishes in his own "word-for-word rendering" of the same passage. To cite one clause:

For [Prince Niou] was of a rank where it was impossible, even though one tried, to go about as one wished and unknown to others, particularly in the capital.

A severe critic might raise the following objections against this version: "rank" is at best an unhappy translation of *mi*, for the society of the *Genji* admitted a distinction between *mi* (standing, status, social estate) and *kurai* (court or imperial rank proper); *muge ni* ("quite" [unknown]) has been omitted in translation; "as one wished" is, to borrow Miller's criticism of Arthur Waley together with his hyperbole, "irresponsible conflation", for *ariki* means simply "moving about" or "excursion"; furthermore, it does violence to the syntax of the original, whose "precise" and "lapidary" qualities Miller is trying to explicate, to subordinate this clause with "and unknown to others"; "even though one tried" is an unpermissible offering for the admittedly elusive *an* *fa i fado*, which Motoori himself glossed as *nan to iute mo* (when all is said and done); and "particularly" mistranslates *dani* (either a minimal, "at least", or, more likely here, an extreme member of an implied series, "even") and jeopardizes the logical connection between the prince's experiences in the city and his situation as he leaves for a romantic quest in the countryside.

There must, finally, be a larger doubt over Miller's sense of proportion and responsibility in mounting so strident and rhetorical a "defence" of Japanese in this way. If "the language of Lady Murasaki, Chikamatsu, Kawabata and Tanizaki" is to be thought of as seriously requiring defence at the present time, it is not primarily from the "pseudo-linguistic palterings" and poor translations denounced by Miller. A greater threat is surely posed by the syntactical and lexical influence of Western languages, mainly English, exerted through the vast tide of often literal and hack translations published in contemporary Japan, and through other media. Miller does seem briefly to deplore the phenomenon of "linguistic drift" towards English, though his explanation of its causes is typically snide and reductive. There is, in any case, little he could do. The difficulty is also that Japanese has historically been massively influenced in this way before, by Chinese, to which Miller seems not to object. Or does he privately, like Motoori, desire that Japanese ahistorically revert to its Altaic origins, all later foreign influences expunged? Motoori's attempts in this direction produced a style so stilted and prolix that it quickly died a natural death. Professor Miller, one supposes, would be satisfied with more rigorous linguistic understanding and better translations. But he, too, in calling for the latter, suggests obscurely that translators should publish things that do not necessarily read as if they were originally written in English". Perhaps, like Motoori, this disciplinarian of language and of linguists will have the courage of his convictions, and, in a more constructive and charitable spirit, give an example of what he means.

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Limits of the subjective

Derek Attridge

JOHNSTURROCK
Structuralism
190pp. Palatin. Paperback, £3.95.
058608521 1

Twenty years ago, structuralism was at a high point. 1966 saw the publication in Paris of Gérard Genette's *Figures I*, Michel Foucault's *Les Mots et les choses*, Roland Barthes's *Critique et vérité*, and Claude Lévi-Strauss's *Du Miel aux cendres*; in the United States, Yale French Studies brought out a special "Structuralism" issue, Johns Hopkins University hosted a symposium later to appear in print as *The Structuralist Controversy*, and an English translation of Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* became widely available. The following year, Jacques Derrida published *De la Grammatologie*, *L'écriture et la différence* and *La Voix et le phénomène*; the high point was already in the past. An introductory survey of structuralism such as John Sturrock's is therefore inevitably a retrospective assessment as well; setting aside the grandiose claims and ambitious programmes that now seem – and perhaps always were – rhetorical devices, what lasting usefulness have structuralism's endeavours had?

Advocates of structuralism are relatively rare these days; for most of those whose disciplines it touched its lessons have either been absorbed or ignored. Sturrock clearly believes that it still has much to offer. "Structuralism remains richly pertinent as a way of thinking and, for some of us, both fruitful and convincing", he confesses in his introduction, and this

conviction runs through his careful and well-informed discussion of structuralist accounts of language, the social sciences (primarily anthropology and historiography), semiotics (including psychoanalysis), and literature; and does not disappear, though the tone becomes more guarded, when, in the final chapter, we reach Derrida and post-structuralism. Although the book has none of the zestfulness of its solidly established competitor, Terence Hawkes's *Structuralism and Semiotics*, its studied prose is constantly concerned to persuade the reader of the practical value of taking structuralism seriously.

But who is this reader? Although the book will doubtless be picked up by many who are familiar with its subject, it is aimed rather at the curious outsider; more specifically, it seems to take as its task the conversion of that traditional enemy of much of structuralism and its descendants: the "liberal humanist", esteemer of pluralism and individual freedom, and hater of excess and extremes. Sturrock's version of structuralism is – like any other – selective and slanted; though his own attachment to pluralism (or his sense of his audience's attachment) makes him deny this just when he appears to have admitted it: he calls his a "decidedly partial introduction", but adds "partial in the sense of being incomplete". That Sturrock is partial to structuralism I have already indicated; his partiality in the other sense becomes evident if we apply a structuralist principle to his own text: what is the relation between what is included and what might have been included but is not? The most obvious omission is that of political theory, and the name that most obviously signals this omission is Louis Althusser. Althusser is mentioned in the introduction as one of the five French thinkers who established structuralism as a

"new way of thought", but he is otherwise referred to only as the author of a *bon mot*. It is not only the omissions which weigh against the claim to impartiality, however. Sturrock's unease with the historical relations between structuralism and Marxism also emerges, for instance, when he is describing Barthes's project in *Mythologies*. The subdued tones of his style suddenly become strident – "At that stage in his life Barthes was inclined to see society in the predatory terms of Marxist analysis, with the bourgeoisie preying malevolently on a repressed proletariat" (a travesty of both Marxist analysis and Barthes's position) – and then subside again: "(a view he greatly softened later when he came to appreciate . . . the virtues of pluralism and of open competition between ideologies)". What would Barthes have made of that ascription to him of a *laissez-faire* ideology, itself brooking no competition ("appreciate" has already settled the question for us)?

The anxious reader is thus reassured: structuralism has no political implications; it increases rather than decreases choice (and neither Sturrock nor his chosen reader, we must assume, would regard the emphasis on choice as itself a political position). Sturrock presents a version of structuralism which inclines instead towards the biological – "Thus does Nature make Structuralists of us all", he quips while discussing Wolfgang Köhler – and in this way minimizes whatever power it might have as a cultural critique. All the fuss, it seems, has stemmed from a mistake about what structuralists want. There is a fear "that the triumph of Structuralism would be the death of 'humanism' in literature. This fear is unfounded. All that Structuralism proposes to do is to establish the limits within which subjectivity must work." Tell that to *Tel Quel*.

Manichaeic dichotomies

Ann Jefferson

J. G. MERQUIOR
From Prague to Paris: A critique of
structuralist and post-structuralist thought
286pp. Verso, £18.95 (paperback, £6.95).
0860911291

Most accounts of structuralism and post-structuralism have been written by apostles whose mission is to convert the humanist heathen, or confirm the faith of the pro-theoretical flock, or else as an intermezzo doing-down of one theory in the name of another (structuralism in the name of post-structuralism, or both in the name of Marxism). J. G. Merquior is clearly trying to ring the changes by treating his topic within the framework of the history of ideas; and his "critique" attempts to show what structuralism, its avatars and its successors, look like on a larger intellectual map and within the context of a rather different discourse.

His credentials for undertaking this task are, on the face of it, impeccable. He has written books on Rousseau, Weber, Lévi-Strauss, Foucault and Western Marxism, and he is certainly impressively well read in all the disciplines that might legitimately claim a place in a twentieth-century history of ideas. He has also studied with a number of the thinkers he discusses and can tell us what it felt like to tiptoe past the closed door of Emile Benveniste's office in the Collège de France on his way to the crowded seminar of Claude Lévi-Strauss. At times, however, he abuses these credentials, and his history gives way to invective (for example, "structuralism . . . refers to the work of a bunch of crabbled academic pundits"), and his critical analysis to jibes (for example, "Until 1982 when he died, there were only two persons in the world really able to understand the theories of Dr Jacques Lacan: himself and God.")

These remarks prove more than a little distracting for the argument and it takes a while for its drift to become established. On the one hand, Merquior laments the wrong path taken by Roman Jakobson at the theoretical crossroads in the Prague School in the 1930s, when the socio-semiotics of Mukarovsky (which theorized literature in relation to the social)

we're abandoned in favour of Jakobson's narrowly formalist approach (which concentrated exclusively on the linguistic). On the other hand, he also suggests that a little structuralism is a good thing: exposure to it made Emile Benveniste a better philologist than his predecessors by "freeing him from the fetishism of origins". Similarly, the work of the medieval historian, Georges Duby, is enhanced by the way that structuralism has served to hone the

instruments of his analysis of feudal ideology. If structuralism could be used with modesty, and were confined – as it is with these exemplary scholars – to serving as a mere "hygiene of explanation", there would be no problem.

As the book proceeds, however, it begins to appear that Merquior's real objection is rather less structuralism's intellectual content than the hubris of its practitioners. This is not to say that he does not have some reservations about

Structuralism does not, however, make its subject safe for humanism; to have done that would have meant rendering it unrecognizable. Much of the book consists of a clearly, and sometimes very forcefully, articulated account of what it is that made structuralism seem threatening, and no doubt still does in some places. To assert, critically, that "Many people assume that signifieds pre-exist signifiers, or that meanings 'await' expression" is not to be soothing. The few valuable pages on structuralism and historiography contain much to disturb historians, and although the chapter on literature plays down the confrontation between structuralist and more traditional modes of criticism (partly by emphasizing, quite rightly, that a structuralist analysis can transform the reader's experience of a text although it is designed only to account for it), it does not shy away from many of the features of structuralism which gave it a bad name in English Departments. Sturrock reminds us, for instance, that when we think we are relating characters in a novel to the flesh-and-blood people around us, we may be relying on ways of apprehending the people around us that we have picked up from novels. And the chapter on post-structuralism, understandably the least successful as summary, can hardly avoid treading on a few liberal humanist toes.

But the disarming way in which these ideas are expounded may well mute their challenge: Sturrock has undoubtedly contributed to that process of assimilation whereby yesterday's scandals become today's common knowledge. Perhaps that is as it should be – there are more important things to be doing in the human sciences than re-enacting old battles; but it is a little sad to see a once-fearsome dog with its teeth drawn, however skilfully the operation has been performed.

Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, but the real issue begins to emerge in Merquior's account of Lévi-Strauss's aesthetics, a dimension of his work that is not usually accorded much attention. He finds in these writings an underlying and "principled revision against modernity", which ultimately reveals the founder of structural anthropology to be playing one of the favourite games of contemporary intellectuals: "kick the West, bash modernity, down with progress".

It is this interpretation of (post-)structuralist activity which underpins the remainder of the book. In his discussions of Derrida, Foucault and Lacan, Merquior detects a widespread "literarization of thought", whose practice makes those who by training and origin should be experts into prophets of doom. Lacanian man is a cursed creature, a "melancholy child of the fall"; Derrida's manichaeic dichotomies "betray a religious pattern of thought". This "literarization" has had, in Merquior's view, the effect of converting thought to modernism, and so contributing to what he regards as an artificially produced cultural crisis. And he argues that the bathos of this conversion is all the more poignant given, first, that the modernist era in art proper is already over, and second, that it misuses Nietzsche; for contemporary theory has emulated Nietzsche on every score except in its nihilistic *Kulturpessimismus*, which is the antithesis of Nietzsche's own role as a prophet of vitality and historical optimism.

It is a pity that these ideas emerge so late in the book's argument, because it is only when it is formulated in these terms that the validity of approaching contemporary critical theory as a part of the history of ideas can be fully appreciated. In view of Merquior's Brazilian origins I suspect that his critique of (post-)structuralist theory is also partly a Third-World critique of a certain kind of Western culture that refuses to acknowledge its own virtues. If so, the book would have gained from this being made explicit. And certainly Merquior's somewhat rambling and carping study would have been improved if he had begun with his provocative and original conclusion, and written his history in order to demonstrate from the outset how the counter-cultural values of modernism were endemic to certain strands of literary theory from Formalism onwards.

MICHAEL HOFMANN

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The mind as a whole

Dan Sperber

JEROME BRUNER
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Over the past thirty years, academic psychology has undergone profound and exciting changes. In part, what is sometimes described as the "Cognitive Revolution" is a revival of philosophical and early psychological interests in the human mind, its powers and its dispositions, after a period in which any notion of the mental was shunned as unscientific. What has made the cognitive movement a "revolution" rather than a mere swing of the pendulum, however, is the development of information technology: mentalism and materialism, which had seemed incompatible, are reconciled in the computer. Old philosophical interests can be pursued in a novel and it is hoped scientific way.

Jerome Bruner is a central figure in the history of the cognitive movement. His early work on perception (with Leo Postman) helped to prepare the ground. The publication of *A Study of Thinking* (which he wrote with J. J. Goodnow and G. A. Austin), contributed to making 1956 the birth-year of the movement. With George A. Miller, he founded in 1960 the Harvard Center for Cognitive Studies, the first of its kind in the world. A central figure, yet not a typical one. In his superb autobiography, *In Search of Mind* (1983), Bruner writes:

I am not a good "discipline" man and do not like boundaries. Studying perception, becoming convinced that the true story lay in our powers of inference, I shifted to the study of thinking. When I sensed that the way we psychologists studied thinking was too square, too lacking in opportunity for the expression of intuition by our "subjects," I was drawn off to a season of studying an inventor's group and of reading mythology. And then, because the processes of thought are so swift, I retreated to the study of cognitive development, hoping to find my quarry in simpler surroundings moving at a slower pace, until I was finally studying infants. And then back I came from that venture, studying language because it seemed to be what was shaping the primitive processes of early cognition.

Not only has Bruner moved with ease from one subfield of psychology to another; he has also published two collections of essays — proper essays, not scientific papers — drawing on his psychological competence but touching on literature, art and philosophy: *On Knowing: Essays for the left hand* in 1962, and now *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. What prompted him to write these essays was a profound dissatisfaction with the state of psychology, in spite of the success of the cognitive movement to which he himself had contributed so much. He has spelled out this dissatisfaction in a key essay to be found in neither collection (though it is reproduced in the enlarged 1979 edition of *On Knowing*), "Psychology and the Image of Man". Asking "why experimental or academic psychology has not had more of an impact on the broad cultural conception of the nature of man", he answers that

its initial concerns, its theoretical orientation, its style of research were not fitted to the kinds of processes or patterns that shape human affairs as they occur in human societies: symbolic systems like language; conceptual structures in terms of which human beings carve up and interpret the world around them, and the cultural constraints imposed by human institutions were not within its terms of reference.

The human mind is everywhere at work, in daily life; in myth, in art, in science, in politics, showing a diversity and depth that cannot be reproduced in laboratory experiments. In order to get a comprehensive picture, the rigorous but narrow experimental approach must be supplemented by the breadth of the humanistic disciplines. This is what Bruner argues and what he exemplifies in *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first, "Two Natural Kinds", Bruner focuses on the psychological foundations of the literary imagination and understanding. The third, "Acting in Constructed Worlds", looks at theories of education and psychological development from an almost anthropological point of view. The second and longest part, "Language and Reality", spells out the theoretical standpoint illustrated in the other two and is therefore pivotal.

Before plunging into the book at the middle, let me admit to the biases with which I approached it. I have long been trying to convince my fellow anthropologists that we should draw on cognitive psychology, and even get involved in it, in order to sharpen our understanding of culture. I am therefore in total sympathy with the converse aim of broadening psychology by looking at what humans actually do with their minds, and at the embodiment of their thoughts and emotions in texts, works of art and institutions. The challenge in either undertaking is to retain enough sharpness when broadening one's outlook, or enough broadness when sharpening one's understanding.

How well has Bruner, an experienced boundary-crosser, met this challenge? Crossing into the territory of the Humanities, he goes native with proficiency and grace. He quotes not only psychologists and philosophers of mind, as one might have expected, but also T. S. Eliot, Italo Calvino, Nicholas of Lyra and Roland Barthes, Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz.

Bruner does more than just adopt the references and figures typical of the Humanities; he also seems to share their viewpoint on two substantive issues where they are at odds with cognitive science. The first is that of "meaning". In everyday speech, we attribute meaning not just to words but to a wide variety of things, from clouds to life itself. In psychology, as in linguistics and philosophy of language, the notion of meaning is much narrower. It is generally seen as a property of signs, in particular linguistic signs, and is carefully distinguished from — and related to — other properties of signs, such as syntactic construction, reference, or evocative power. For some social scientists, the everyday notion of meaning is, on the contrary, too narrow. They view social phenomena as "texts" and culture as "systems of meaning", and their own task as one of interpretation.

Bruner deplores the fact that "interpretive social science" of the kind represented, say, by Clifford Geertz in anthropology, emphasizing the irreducibility of meaning, has not had much hearing in psychology". He himself gives more than a hearing, he gives his voice to such an interpretive approach when he writes, for instance, that "human beings search for meaning and for its incarnation in reality", or that "social realities are . . . meanings that we achieve by sharing human cognitions". Yet, at other times, Bruner refers to standard contributions (including his own) to the psycho-linguistic study of meaning, or cites approvingly the work of the philosopher Paul Grice, whose approach to meaning is radically reductionist. Bruner freely juxtaposes these two notions of meaning, the broad and the narrow, without any explicit effort at integrating them.

The second issue on which Bruner takes an unexpected stand is that of relativism. In a key essay (written with Carol Feldman) on and around Nelson Goodman's recent book *Of Mind and Other Matters*, he endorses the relativist view

that contrary to common sense there is no unique "real world" that preexists and is independent of human mental activity and human symbolic languages; that what we call the world is a product of some mind whose symbolic procedures construct the world.

Relativism is great fun, especially when a Goodman encapsulates it in paradoxes such as: "if there is any world, there are many, and if many, none", or: "According to one variety of solipsism, only I exist, but this holds for each of the many people in the world. Somewhat analogously, one might say that there is only one world but this holds for each of the many worlds." Like solipsism, relativism is both starkly counter-intuitive and extremely hard to prove wrong. Unlike solipsism, it has, in the multicultural world of today, a certain moral appeal: it speaks for tolerance.

To Bruner, Goodman's relativism is appealing on yet another count. Goodman is less interested in the ontology of the many worlds he says we make than in the way we make worlds by making versions of them "with languages or other symbol systems". Because Goodman is thus led to insist on the constructive aspect of cognition, Bruner believes that he should become "the immediate idol of cognitive psychologists". Alas, Bruner can-

plains, "psychologists (even cognitive psychologists) like to think of worlds that people create as 'representing' a real or aboriginal world".

Actually, two logically independent forms of relativism are here conflated. One is metaphysical: if contradictory statements can be equally true, as Goodman maintains, then it is reasonable to argue that there are different worlds and that truth is relative to worlds. The other form of relativism is cognitive: to the extent that people's perceptions and beliefs are more influenced by their education and general cultural environment than by the genetically determined cognitive processing of physical stimuli, human cognition is relative to culture. Unlike metaphysical relativism, which should be accepted or rejected as a whole, cognitive relativism is a matter of degree: there is no doubt that culture affects cognitive processes; the question is to what extent: superficially, or, as true relativists maintain, radically.

Metaphysical relativism is, I believe, irrelevant to Bruner's purpose. The psychologist cannot presume to sit next to the philosopher, watching from above as versions and worlds are being made below (which is not what philosophers are doing anyhow). The psychologist, like every empirical scientist, is in the business of developing a fragment of the best possible version of one world. Bruner, notwithstanding his repeated denials that there is a real world which we strive to represent, devotes a chapter to "Psychological Reality". There, far from denying the reality of psychological categories or defending a nominalist view of psychological concepts, he argues for more strenuous criteria of psychological reality: for a psychological category to be considered real, he maintains, it must be shown to be not only useful to a formal description of psychological processes but also relevant to an understanding of the role these processes play in people's "transactions with the world".

In the world a fragment of which psychologists, including Bruner, are trying to describe — the parochial world of contemporary science — if you are a metaphysical relativist, the world *tout court* if you are not — it could be the case that members of different cultures arrive at radically different world-views, as members of different animal species certainly do; or it could be that cultural differences are peripheral developments of a common core of perceptions and categorizations. If both metaphysical and cognitive relativism happen to be right, then there is the comforting possibility that each world-view is true in some world; but there is no particular fit between the two forms of relativism otherwise: either one could be true and the other false.

While psychologists have no special reason to accept or reject metaphysical relativism, they do have special reason to be suspicious of cognitive relativism. Part of their task is to explain how human beings transform arrays of physical stimuli into some form of knowledge. It is clear that in so doing, humans go "beyond the information given" (to use the title of another collection of essays by Bruner). Cognitive psychologists are led to adopt constructivism in a broad sense — the view that human mental representations owe as much or more to internal construction as to external stimuli. Though Bruner endorses Goodman's views as a package, I suspect him of being attracted by the philosopher's literally intended claim that we "make worlds" as a provocative hyperbole of constructivism.

To say that cognition is constructive tells us nothing about the origin of the abilities which make construction possible: are most of them part of the mind's innate equipment, or are they themselves constructed in stages on the basis of individual experience (Piaget's version), or somehow transferred from culture to initially blank minds in the form of languages or other symbol systems (a view favoured in the social sciences)? To most cognitive psychologists, one thing is clear: in order to learn an ability, one has to have an ability to learn; the more basic abilities, the linguistic ones for instance, must be, to an important extent, genetically determined, the construction of abilities from within, or the internalization of culturally constructed abilities, can only take place on some well-developed innate foundation. For relativists such as Goodman, cognitive

construction is like fireworks: patterns emerging out of patterns, all high off the ground. For psychologists, this image of cognitive power unbounded by cognitive constraints makes little sense. Cognitive construction is better seen as a process of growth, bio-ecologically rooted, developing under the constraints of some kind of mental "gravity", extracting substance from the environment according to an internal programme, and blossoming in variegated patterns only at the top.

Has Bruner then adopted Goodman's form of constructivism and forsaken the cognitive psychological viewpoint? Not at all. In a cogent essay entitled "The Transactional Self", he argues against the view common in pre-cognitive psychology, and espoused by Freudians and Piagetians alike, that "initially young children are incapable of taking the perspective of others, have no conception of Other Minds, and must be brought to sociality or allocentrism through development and learning". He maintains on the contrary (on the basis of his own empirical investigations) that one-year-old children are already capable of taking another person's perspective. He concludes that the human ability to interact starts "as a biological readiness based on a primitive appreciation of other minds, is then reinforced and enriched by the calibrational powers that language bestows", powers which he sees as essentially innate. The role of culture is to provide "a large-scale map on which to operate". This is in direct opposition to Goodman's anti-nativist, anti-universalist approach to cognition. The opposition, however, is not even discussed, let alone resolved by Bruner.

His eclecticism seems to come from a desire to embrace a wide range of interconnected issues, cautiously kept apart in standard scholarship. To this end, Bruner gathers all kinds of conceptual tools from a variety of sources. Some he designs or remodels himself, others he adds on the strength of their catalogue description. To a certain extent, *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds* is a display of the resulting tool-kit.

Prominent in it is the notion of a cultural tool-kit itself: "human mental activity depends for its full expression upon being linked to a cultural toolkit — a set of prosthetic devices, so to speak". Therefore "we are well advised when studying mental activity to take into account the tools employed in that activity". These tools are, of course, socially transmitted, hence a comprehensive study of cognition cannot be divorced from a study of social interaction. This is in direct contrast to the idealization under which much experimental psychology functions and according to which humans develop a view of reality "solely on the basis of private encounters with exemplars of natural states". Against this, Bruner insists that "most of our approaches to the world are mediated through negotiation with others".

In trying to bring together the psychological and the socio-cultural perspective, Bruner draws inspiration from the work of the Russian Marxist psychologist Lev Vygotsky, whom he helped to introduce to the West and to whom he now devotes a chapter. Vygotsky, in developing what he called a "sociocultural" approach to psychological processes, argued that higher mental functions appear first on a social plane, between people, and only then, as a result of social interaction, on a psychological plane, inside the mind of individuals. He saw psychological development as largely a matter of adding to the child's initial abilities further socially defined abilities. He coined the notion of a "Zone of Proximal Development" to characterize the gap between the problem-solving abilities exhibited by a child on her own at a certain stage of her development and the abilities she might exhibit under adult guidance and then internalize.

Bruner's own studies illustrate the notion of a zone of proximal development. For instance, in teaching a child to build a pyramid out of wooden blocks, a tutor observed by Bruner and his associates "made things such that the child could do with her what he plainly could not do without her. And as the tutoring proceeded, the child took over from her parts of the task that he was not able to do at first but, with mastery, became consciously able to do under his own control". Similarly, his study of mother-child interaction during language acquisition revealed that the

mother helps the child by remaining "forever on the growing edge of the child's competence". Bruner concludes

that any innate Language Acquisition Device, LAD, that helps members of our species to penetrate language could not possibly succeed but for the presence of a Language Acquisition Support System, LASS, provided by the social world, that is matched to LAD in some regular way. It is LASS that helps the child navigate across the Zone of Proximal Development to full and conscious control of language use.

The Vygotskian idea that learning in general and language acquisition in particular require step-by-step assistance may appeal to common sense. However, what seems clear to common sense may remain obscure to the demanding cognitive scientist. First, the fact that help is given does not establish that help is needed or even useful: many parents teach their babies to walk, but untaught babies will walk just as well. What is the evidence that a child addressed from the start in normal adult ways, rather than at the edge of her linguistic competence, would have trouble acquiring language? Second, suppose help in the "zone of proximal development" did prove beneficial to language acquisition; this fact, which would seem explanatory to common sense — of course help makes things easier — would remain something to be explained for the cognitive scientist: the human ability to be helped in cognitive tasks, the helpfulness of particular stimuli, are deep psychological puzzles.

Comparable problems arise with the chapter "Thought and Emotion". Here Bruner criticizes "the habit of drawing heavy conceptual boundaries between thought, action, and emotion as 'regions' of the mind, then later being forced to construct conceptual bridges to connect what should never have been put asunder". He adduces interesting animal and human examples to show how deeply intertwined thought and emotion are, a fact abstracted away in most experimental and speculative psychology. Bruner does not produce an explicit alternative to today's abstractions, but he raises the ante with a powerful metaphor: to isolate thought, emotion and action "is like studying the planes of a crystal separately, losing sight of the crystal that gives them being". Actually, what gives being to thought, emotion and action is the brain, in which they have many more areas of contact than the planes of a crystal but are also much less alike. The crystallographic image does not square with the neurological evidence. The problem raised by Bruner is genuine and important, but he produces no compelling argument to show that the holistic approach — which no one has any idea how to implement — is the right one.

When it comes to "Approaching the Literary" (the title of the first chapter), Bruner's approach, although avowedly influenced by modern literary theory, remains in important respects that of a psychologist. Whereas traditional criticism was much concerned with the origins of a text; and structuralist and post-structuralist poetics is primarily concerned with properties intrinsic to it, Bruner looks at the text as a potential input to mental processes:

Once we have characterized a text in terms of its structure, its historical context, its linguistic form, its genre, its multiple levels of meaning, and the rest, we may still wish to discover how and in what ways the text affects the reader and, indeed, what produces such effects on the reader as do occur . . .

Thus we should try to characterize not only the multiple meanings, but also "the susceptibility of readers to polysemy". We should find not only what genre is, but also "what does genre mean psychologically". In other words, "we are in fact asking not only a morphological question about the actual text, but also a question about the interpretive processes that are 'lost' by the text in the reader's mind".

To these questions put forward in the first chapter, an answer is attempted in the second, "Two Modes of Thought".

Let me begin by setting out my argument as baldly as possible. There are two modes of cognitive functioning, two modes of thought, each providing distinctive ways of ordering experience, of constructing reality. . . . Each of the ways of knowing, however, has operating principles of its own and its own criteria of well-formedness. They differ radically in their procedures for verification. A good story and a well-formed argument are different natural kinds. One mode is the "paradigmatic or logico-

scientific", which "attempts to fulfil the ideal of a formal, mathematical system of description and explanation", and "seeks to transcend the particular by higher and higher reaching for abstraction". The other mode is the "narrative", which "deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course".

The distinction is an old and familiar one, as Bruner is well aware, who prefaces his book with the following epigraph from William James: "To say that all human thinking is essentially of two kinds — reasoning on the one hand, and narrative, descriptive, contemplative thinking on the other — is to say only what every reader's experience will corroborate." However, Bruner's variation on this theme is somewhat puzzling. To begin with, he talks of his paradigmatic and narrative modes as if they together encompassed all forms of human thought: but what of, say, a topographical account or a weather report: they are descrip-

irreducible nature of intention . . . That is to say, intention is immediately and intuitively recognizable" (not very Goodmanian, that). To provide good "story-stuff", vicissitudes have to form a unity which, argues Bruner, "contains a *plight* into which *characters* have fallen as a result of intentions that have gone awry . . . And it requires an uneven distribution of underlying consciousness among the characters with respect to the plight." To develop such story-stuff into a literary work of art — and here Bruner follows Wolfgang Iser — discourse must "recruit the reader's imagination", it "must make it possible for the reader to 'write' his own virtual text".

Bruner lists three features that seem to him crucial in enlisting the reader: "The first is the triggering of *presupposition*, the creation of implicit rather than explicit meanings. For with explicitness, the reader's degrees of interpretive freedom are annulled . . . The second is what I shall call *subjectification*: the depiction



"Cabbage Fragment", 1931, by Edward Weston; it is reproduced from Supreme Instants: The photography of Edward Weston by Beaumont Newhall (191pp. Thames and Hudson, £20.05/00541221).

of reality through the filter of the consciousness of protagonists in the story. . . . The third is multiple perspective: beholding the world not univocally but simultaneously through a set of prisms each of which catches some part of it." Together these three features "succeed in *subjectivizing* reality", by which Bruner means "to render the world less fixed, less banal, more susceptible to recreation". This he sees as the function of literature "to open to dilemmas, to the hypothetical, to the range of possible worlds that a text can refer to".

Here again, Bruner is offering variations on a theme, a modern one this time, familiar to readers of recent literary theory. His variations bring out excellently the intuitive appeal of this kind of theorizing, but they also share its conceptual vagueness, which prevents radical objections being made to it. He breaks fresh ground, however, in applying experimental techniques so as to study the procedures by means of which "subjectivization" is achieved.

Bruner asked subjects to retell stories they had read in order "to create, so to speak, a virtual text" (Iser's concept). Actually, the reader's retelling is not the "virtual" text he is supposed to have in his mind but a new actual text. Bruner does not stop to discuss the relationship of this new text to what the reader-reviewer has in his mind. He goes on to compare the original and the reader's version, for instance in terms of the types and numbers of "Todorovian transformations" (linguistic procedures which put descriptive statements in a subjective perspective), found in both texts.

Some parallelism and some divergence are found. As Bruner is the first to admit, the experimental data presented are extremely fragmentary and rough, and the interpretation is by no means straightforward. I am not sure that, as they stand, they will convince either literary theorists of the usefulness of experimental testing, or experimental psychologists of the testability of literary theories.

Whereas in the first part of the book Bruner maintains a psychologist's stance in looking at issues in the humanities, in the short third part he adopts the point of view of a social scientist to look at issues in psychology, and more specifically psychological development and education.

In "The Language of Education", he defends a view of culture as "a *forum* for negotiating and renegotiating meaning" and infers from it "that induction into the culture via education, if it is to prepare the young for life as lived, should also partake of the spirit of a forum, of negotiation, of the recreating of meaning". This view contrasts with the traditional view of education as "transmission of knowledge and values". It also differs from Bruner's own earlier defence of "learning by inventing" (Piaget's phrase). He explains:

My model of the child in those days was very much in the tradition of the solo child mastering the world by representing it to himself in his own terms. In the intervening years, I have come increasingly to recognize that most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture. . . . It is this that leads me to emphasize not only discovery and invention but the importance of negotiating and sharing — in a word, of joint culture creating as an object of schooling.

There is, though, one premise of modern education that Bruner does not reconsider: the entrusting of education to a specialized institution, the school. Oblivious of the anthropological fact that, in most human societies, children become competent adults without the benefit of institutional education, modern theoreticians automatically assume that what must be done in education must be done principally if not exclusively by the school. Yet Bruner's arguments in favour of having children participate in cultural negotiation and sharing should lead him to consider the possibility that some essential parts of the educational process cannot be performed within the segregated world of schools and that better education might mean, not more, but less institutionalization.

To the question, finally, whether Bruner has managed to reconcile the psychologist's rigour with the humanist's broader scope, the answer must be that he has not. It is not that he has failed, simply that his aim was altogether different. He has become an enthusiastic supporter of the interpretive social sciences, which he believes have brought about "a revolution in the definition of human culture". He develops the standard objections of interpretive social scientists to psychology: that it is too positivistic, naively realist and narrow in scope. He hardly mentions, however, the standard objections of experimental psychologists to the social sciences: that their theories are too vague, and their evidence too anecdotal. Addressing psychologists, he extols the merits of the interpretive social sciences; addressing social scientists, he is content with showing that psychological and hermeneutic themes, as well as experimental and anecdotal evidence, can mix. In the mix, however, psychological themes are freely interpreted, and experimental evidence is used anecdotally.

Unlike Bruner, I believe that psychologists' criticisms of the social sciences are at least as well taken as the social scientists' criticisms of psychology. There are simply too few hypotheses that are both interesting and testable in the social sciences, as in literary theory. If the social sciences are going to benefit from psychology's methodological rigour (and from the new resources the computer model provides for a materialist approach to human affairs), and if, conversely, psychology is going to benefit from the social sciences' breadth of scope, then both will have to change. This means that there will be no joining of forces without reorganization, no agreement without prior confrontation. For the time being, the barrier between psychology and the social sciences stands. Bruner has crossed it with style, but he has done little, so far, to lower it.

John C. Little

Behind the lines

Lorna Sage

While we were watching the Hungarians thirty years on, they were watching themselves as usual. As a British Council visitor coinciding with the disappointingly quiet anniversary of the revolution, one was politely warned off from drawing conclusions. The Budapest cultural climate is cosy, claustrophobic, cruelly self-aware: as are the overheated restaurants and bars. When you leave your jacket at the cloakroom in the lobby on entering, you lose a skin, the talk is prickly with self-consciousness. Which may be another way of saying that Budapest was and is a Jewish town, and that this gives its "dissidents" a double face – "liberal", urbane, cosmopolitan plus (or versus?) "folk" nationalism. There are all kinds of outgoing habits of mind associated with the mere survival of Jewish intellectual life post-war ("simply keeping an eye on what's going on around you – that's the difference between us and Poland", says someone snobbily, "they abolished their Jews"). And as a sort of demonstration-piece designed to convey the "tone" in question, Katalin Budai who writes for the literary weekly *Élet és Irodalom* (and isn't, as it happens, Jewish) tells a story of a recent scandal about censorship, which is really, she maintains, a scandal about scandal. Locked in their extraordinary language (she explains in very good English), Hungarians find it all-too-easy to invoke the heroism of principle – "this is the best place to suffer". The regional magazine *Tiszatú* (whose editor is an old Party Member) ran into trouble in June for publishing two poems alluding to the thirtieth anniversary, and being in general nationally-minded about Hungary (especially about the Hungarian-speakers in Transylvania, whose cultural survival is certainly a hotter issue than 1956). The ritual of literary suffering was acted out (no new issues of *Tiszatú* to date); however, no matter how one agreed with the gesture (there's plenty of territory to cover after all), wasn't there perhaps too much moral prestige in the act of putting pen to paper . . . ? Is it good for poets that a mere allusion can close a magazine, or a clumsy metaphor be dangerous, or a not-very-good poem make such waves . . . ? These are questions put with conscious mockery, in the awareness that when censorship makes significance, the currency of significance itself is undermined. So when people say (as they do) that nobody wants banning scandals, they're suggesting (subversively) a kind of ironic collusion between authorities and (just possibly) sceptical intellectuals. The scandals themselves are a risky way of keeping literary life alive . . . Still, for the outsider, the effect remains heroic – or at the least superior, along the lines of "So you think you have problems, you're nowhere near" (have a folk metaphor) "the last drop in the glass".

Anglophilia flourishes. The two British Council representatives, who were only last year recognized as being British Council instead of suspect "diplomats", are worked off their feet, and gloat not a little over their American counterparts incarcerated still in protocol, agitprop and the Embassy. The Council's library of 11,500 books attracts around 100 visitors a day, looking for English language textbooks, documentary histories, atlases, newspapers and periodicals; and there is a plan afoot, blessed by the Hungarian Minister for Culture and Education, to establish some secondary schools which will teach almost all subjects in English. But then, the English language is almost, if you think of it, the mirror-image and opposite of Hungarian: the one soupyly concentrated and introverted, the other spread thin everywhere.

Malcolm Bradbury's Hungarian translator, Ferenc Tökés, is hesitating over *Rates of Exchange* – it is, he fears, written in unconvertible currency, too obvious to work.

Aboard the Band Aid bandwagon just in time for Christmas are more than 100 poets. *Poets for Africa* (the First Poetry Band Aid) is a bit like a surrealist map of the world, thoroughly international and at the same time pretty Irish. The women behind it, the Irish writer Lynda Moran, discovered her vocation for charity in

what must now seem the correct canonical manner ("I was watching Ethiopia on TV, and said to myself, *fuck this* . . ."). She then invested the house-keeping in postage stamps and went straight to the top, i.e. wrote to Samuel Beckett asking to be backed ("I said, you know, you're Irish and you're away, I'm Irish and I'm not away . . .") and received imprimatur on a fairly substantial cheque more or less by return of post. This enabled her to start writing to poets asking them to waive copyright, and impress a list of other sponsors, including Guinness (Ireland), Beecham (Ireland), Lord Longford and Spike Milligan. The *Poets for Africa* book, which has work by Tony Harrison, Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney and more than 100 more, was produced with typesetting and printing by the *Leinster Leader*, and is being distributed free in Ireland by Newspress. And making sure that the initiative survives the present-buying season, Ms Moran has fixed up a trip to the United States in January, having rung up the Dublin Foreign Ministry ("Look, lads . . .") who've been persuaded to pay the fare. For the moment, though, the priority is England, where the Poetry Society's Pamela Clunies-Ross is working unreasonably hard ("Now that's the daughter of a woman") organizing the sales and donations; and the book will be launched in a large reading-and-signing session at Riverside Studios. Always assuming, that is, that the Customs don't declare the books contraband when Moran removes them from under her couch in Dublin, and flies them over on Aer Lingus.

Sales of books and manuscripts

H. R. Woudhuysen

When Mahler played the first movement of his Second Symphony to von Bülow in 1891, his friend was appalled at the noise: "If what I have just heard is music, then I no longer understand anything about music!" It is the autograph manuscript of this first movement, called "Totenfeier" or "Funeral Rite" of the Resurrection Symphony that Sotheby's are selling on the second day of their sale of continental printed books, manuscripts and music, beginning on November 27. Mahler himself had few doubts about his Second Symphony's worth; "Could my *Second* cease to exist without irreparable loss to art and humanity?" he asked. Sotheby's estimate that this unpublished full score, the most substantial extant witness of the movement – a working manuscript, heavily revised in places – will fetch between £140,000 and £180,000. An equally severe price of between £140,000 and £160,000 is expected for the autograph manuscript of Mahler's first song cycle, the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Again this is a full score containing revisions and markings by the composer, and providing important evidence for the cycle's evolution. The prices these two remarkable pieces make in the sale will be of as much interest as the identity of their purchaser: it seems unlikely that they will remain in Britain for long.

It would be a pity if the same fate fell to two other collections of musical manuscripts included in the sale. One is a set of letters from Benjamin Britten to the record producer John Culshaw, covering the years from the early 1960s to the time of the composer's death in 1976. As would be expected they are mainly concerned with the problems of recording Britten's works, but also touch on Culshaw's work as a television producer. The price they are expected to make of £4,500–£5,500 may mean that they are out of the reach of their natural home at Aldeburgh. The second group of English material is a good series of lots devoted to Elgar. As well as autograph letters, his copy of Beethoven's violin sonatas and the orchestral score of *The Frigates of the Fleet*, the most important item in this group is a very early manuscript of sketches and drafts possibly compiled for the Worcester Glee Club in the mid-1870s: this is expected to fetch as much as £5,000.

The other outstanding musical items (among many others) in this part of the sale include Mozart's working manuscript of the first forty-eight bars of his aria for tenor and orchestra "Al più tremar non voglio" of 1769–70 (esti-

Poets for Africa, edited by Lynda Moran, is available from The Poetry Society, 21 Earls Court Square, London, SW5, for £5; or from the Poets for Africa Reading, Saturday, November 22, 8.40pm Riverside Studios, Crisp Road, Hammersmith, London W6 9RL, admission £3. Further information from the Poetry Society, 01 370 6929.

Another marathon poetry reading – the "Poems on the Underground" day-long vigil for Remembrance at St James's Piccadilly, – was designed to make peace not cash, and succeeded in its way, though more as a series of solitaires perhaps than a chorus. Over fifty poets read their own and other people's work; Anthony Thwaite (reading Larkin) rubbed shoulders with the Radical Poetry Cupbearer; some people (Jon Silkin, Ruth Fainlight, Fleur Adcock) read poems about the war experience of city children evacuated to the country; Lauris Edmond, last year's Commonwealth Poetry Prize winner sent a specially written contribution from New Zealand; some invoked Bomber Command – Peter Scupham read from *Under the Barrage*, his forthcoming Oxford University Press book about the air war in 1944–5; and an unpublished RAF veteran from Cardiff read a "Ballad of Heaven and Hell", written last year, about having taken part in the Dresden raid. The American organizer Judith Chernaik, whose special talent (witness the charm of the Underground idea) is

mate £30,000–£40,000); a scribal manuscript of Beethoven's famous "Kannst du das Land" with a few alterations by the composer (estimate £8,000–£10,000), and one of the few contemporary and authentic portraits of Beethoven remaining in private hands – a warm and romantic picture of him painted by Isidor Neugass in 1806, which is expected to go as high as £80,000.

The literary manuscripts in the second half of the first day's sale also contain some interesting evaluations. A letter from Racine, promising to send his brother-in-law an overcoat, is estimated at £5,000–£6,000; not because overcoats play a significant part in the French dramatist's works, but because autograph material by Racine is very rare. Similarly, an autograph letter from Machiavelli "intervening on behalf of the bearer . . . who has been threatened with a law-suit over a field", could hardly be more prosaic; but it is apparently unpublished and so estimated at £6,000–£8,000. Gauguin's famous letter from Tahiti to Paul Sérusier generally complaining about life, which includes a sketch for the painting "Vairoumati Tei Oa", although published, is estimated at £40,000–£50,000. The catalogue describes Simone de Beauvoir's *Les Mandarins* as "one of the major novels of the twentieth century". The heavily revised working draft, which differs considerably from the published version, is expected to make between £5,000 and £10,000. The estimate may betray a certain element of doubt about just how "major" Beauvoir is. Borges seems to have achieved classic status much more quickly and certainly: twelve postcards and one letter to the writer Estela Canto written between 1947 and 1949, which are "at once love letters and an account both of his own writing and of the contemporary literary scene" (quite an achievement to get all these on postcards) are estimated at £12,500–£15,000.

The first part of the sale appears to offer safer and less volatile material, being devoted to early printed and scientific books with some fine and some remarkably restrained French Restoration bindings. A particularly attractive mid-sixteenth century Parisian strapwork binding on one of the most interesting of all Renaissance books, Agrippa's *De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum* (Basle, 1530?), which appears to have been in English ownership by at least 1670, is estimated at £2,000–£2,500. There is an equally interesting binding on an edition of the grammarian Priscian's works printed at Venice in 1492. This appears to have been executed at Cambridge, soon after it was issued; by the binder known only by his initials "W. G." and is valued from a London

thinking in unBritish ways about poetry and city life, was however quietly kicking herself for having relied on publicity in London schools, without having quite registered that our uncivic way we don't give a holiday to mourning.

Swapping words for money is not *all* fun, either. Eager exporters hoping to attend the Saudi Book Fair in Riyadh in January must have had their work cut out. Their lists must conform to censorship guidelines that sound splendidly playful. "Choosing titles . . . is mostly a matter of common sense", says the preamble, and then goes on:

There are however some surprising examples of books that could be rejected. *Cook Books* with alcoholic beverages used in the recipes; *Encyclopedias* referring to Israel as a recognized state; *Religious – and Philosophical* books with ideas contrary to Islamic beliefs including Islamic extremist literature, eg Shiite Islamic books. This also includes contrary political philosophies such as Communism; *Chemistry* books describing methods of distilling alcoholic beverages or for making bombs.

Then there are Art, Sex and Sociology (unspecified) to worry about, too. Though it's safe to assume that all variants on *Jenny lives with Eric and Martin* (whose presence in school libraries so excites the Secretary of State for Education) wouldn't make the grade.

seventeenth-century bookseller to a Continental collector whose illuminated arms appear on the second leaf (estimate £2,000–£3,000).

The most important book in this part of the sale is a rare and almost complete copy of a fifteenth-century block book, the *Biblia Pauperum*. Block books were once thought to have preceded books printed by movable type because of the laboriousness of their manufacture: each page comprised an illustration and a few lines of print carved out of a block of wood. They are now recognized as rather later productions, made for the simplest instructional purposes, and this specimen, which is estimated at £40,000–£50,000, probably dates from about 1460 and was made in the north Netherlands. Its woodcuts and colouring are fine. There are, finally, some interesting early communist items, including the first nine issues of *Isvestiya* (estimate £5,000–£7,000) and a first edition of the original translation into Russian of Volume One of Marx's *Capital*, issued at St Petersburg in 1872, it was endorsed by the censor – "few people in Russia will read it, and fewer still will understand it" – and is expected to go for as much as £20,000.

Phillips's sale on October 23 was fairly successful with some lots doing extremely well. The star of the sale was an early Dutch life of Christ printed at Zwolle in 1495, containing twenty-seven full-page and over a hundred half-page woodcuts; these had been coloured by an early hand: the book's attractiveness was added to by its being in a contemporary binding. It had been expected to go for as much as £6,000, but in the event fetched £12,500. A proportionally even greater improvement on its higher pre-sale estimate was shown by two early C. S. Lewis first editions: *Spiritus in Bondage*, 1919, inscribed pseudonymously "Bang went 3/61 yrs very truly Clive Hamilton", together with *Dynier* had been expected to go for £50 at most – they fetched £280.

There was little excitement at Bloomsbury Book Auctions' general sale on October 30. Standard modern editions of the collected works of such noted writers as Lenin, Marx, Engels and Stalin made low prices or remained unsold. On the other hand, a set of first editions of *The Lord of the Rings*, with their distinctive wrappers were bid up to £1,200 to Bologna against a higher pre-sale estimate of £800, and a first edition of Graham Greene's book of verses, *Babbling April*, published while he was still at Oxford in 1925, went for £580 to Maggs (estimate £200–£300). An almost complete set of the art journal *The Studio* from 1893 to 1903 was keenly sought after, fetching £1,200 to Steenson (estimate £400–£600). None of these prices includes the buyer's premium.

Letters

Wagner's Antisemitism

Sir, – In his review of Jacob Katz's *The Darker Side of Genius* (November 14) John Deathridge writes, "Once the ideological purpose of Wagner's music dramas is seen to include the saving of the Jews, it is only a small step to the fatal argument that he defined the boundaries of the lost paradise he wanted to conjure up in his works by including in them antisemitic stereotypes in the form of social outcasts like Mime or Kundry", leaving it unclear whether or not he agrees that it was part of Wagner's "ideological purpose", or indeed whether it would be critically relevant if it were.

Since Wagner wrote so copiously about the meanings of his music dramas – while often conceding defeat as to what they mean – and since for the last fourteen years of his life Cosima copied down anything he said that seemed to her of significance, it has always struck me as odd that he never, so far as I can discover, suggested identification between characters in his works and members of various races, even though he was, regrettably, obsessed with racial themes. I have seen it suggested that Beckmesser, Klingsor, Mime and Kundry are meant to be Jews on numerous occasions, but surely an artist as tactlessly explicit in his conversation and writings would have said so? Further, in the case of Mime – the most frequently canvassed Jewish character – if he were a Jew, then all the Nibelungs would be too. Wagner never lets us forget Mime's "racial" membership in that respect. But they are a wretchedly exploited collection of diligent workers, for whom, in *Das Rheingold*, the only work in which they appear, we feel nothing but horrified sympathy.

MICHAEL TANNER.
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Empson on Eliot

Sir, – Ann Pasternak Slater takes rather more than a smack at William Empson (November 14). A series of body blows, more like, and in the matter of his "emendation" of T. S. Eliot's punctuation she hits below the belt – innocent, no doubt, but with hubristic relish. Holding up to scorn Empson's analysis of the opening lines from "A Game of Chess" in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, she claims with proprietorial confidence that "for those of us furnished with the Eliot rather than the Empson Version" all doubts about a particular clutch of ambiguities have been resolved, long before the end of the analysis, by our knowledge that Empson has inadvertently substituted a comma for a full stop after "profusion" in the ninth line. Not so. *Seven Types of Ambiguity* was published in 1930, and although a full stop seems to have crept into some later printings all those on my shelves, including Faber's 1925 edition of *Poems 1909–1925*, and the line with a semicolon.

MICHAEL TANNER.
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

Sergei Eisenstein

Sir, – Herbert Marshall's complaint (Letters, November 7) that I have not explained my reservations about his version of Eisenstein's *Immortal Memories* must stretch the credulity of anyone who has read the original review carefully. However, since that review was published, against my wishes, in abridged form, and since the editorial cuts did somewhat alter the emphasis of my criticisms, perhaps you would now print the omitted passage which details some of my reservations about his book. Having made the point that the sections for which Marshall alone was responsible – the preface, the appendix and the acknowledgements – should properly have been used to clarify the main body of the text rather than to settle old scores, my original review continued:

Worse still, these parts of the book contain a number of fundamental and largely inexplicable mistakes that should never have survived the editorial process. Apart from what are presumably straightforward typographical errors, Marshall confuses the Mongols and the Mongols (p. xii), ascribes Swedish nationality to the Danish actress Asta Nielsen (p. 80, n. 3), merges the brothers Ilya and Leonid Trauberg in the index (p. 291), and places Alma-Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan, in Uzbekistan (p. xv).

Perhaps he would now care to correct either the or these errors? Perhaps too, if he finds Soviet scholarship in this field so unsound, he might like to answer the charge made in my review that he borrows freely from it virtually without acknowledgement? Significantly, he ignores this charge in his letter. But factual accuracy and proper attribution of sources are central to scholarship, especially in the historical field. Historians of the Soviet Union have a particular responsibility, given the falsification of so much evidence in the past. So perhaps Marshall might also like to substantiate his assertion that there are "actual errors of fact" in my review?

In his letter Marshall compounds the errors in his book. He says that I am "editing another translation of the same Eisenstein material", presumably thereby insinuating that I might have an ulterior motive for criticizing his own edition. Later in fact general editor of Eisenstein's *Selected Writings* in several volumes for the British Film Institute and Indiana University Press. We have no plans to include an edition of the memoirs in this series. This is not a dispute about demarcation, but about standards.

Marshall's assertion that I am one of "a small group of pro-Soviet critics" is entertaining but similarly erroneous. I am confident that anyone with even a passing acquaintance with my own political sentiments, my published work – and, indeed with the company that I keep – can confirm that. Marshall appears to assume that personal witness bestows a unique legitimacy upon his current political stance. But for a scholar and historian personal involvement is not necessarily a source of strength, any more than distance and detachment are necessarily a source of weakness.

When the first volumes of *Eisenstein: Selected Writings* are published in the autumn of 1987, your readers will have a further opportunity to judge my scholarly standards for themselves. It is, after all, Marshall's scholarly standards that I was criticizing in my review. In the meantime I trust that he will answer the criticisms that I have made. Innendo is no substitute for fact.

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whose sensible scheme was overthrown by a Labour Cabinet Committee; and part to the Conservative ministers who finally put through the legislation.

I did Mr Elstein an injustice. It must have been his fiery style of argument that affected me. I re-read his essay and it breathes the pure spirit of Peacock. Whether that will make for better programmes is now for debate.

NOEL ANNAN.
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Freud's Development

Sir, – Peter Gay's review of my book, *Freud's Discovery of Psychoanalysis* (October 3), betrays the generous spirit of a man who understands the enormous complexity of this subject, and appreciates the many different ways in which it can be approached. So, even with his strong dissent from the political dimension of my interpretation, I was pleased that he found so much of value in the book. Certainly he raises issues of great importance, not only explicitly – the place of politics in Freud's development – but also implicitly – the relationship of social and political factors in the pursuit of intellectual history generally. I was surprised, however, that in discussing Freud's ideas, Gay would argue that the political ideal of freedom so central to nineteenth-century liberalism has nothing to do with psychoanalytic freedom, which he describes as "inner psychological room for manoeuvre". This inner freedom of choice was closely tied to a political ideal of freedom in such important thinkers as Kant, Schiller and Goethe, all of whom Freud read and admired, so it should not be surprising that a similar link can be found in Freud's development. In fact, once the context is understood, the very words Gay cites to make his point actually provide evidence for my case. Gay writes, "Freud summed up the aim of psychoanalytic therapy, 'where id was, there ego shall be'. The freedom he hoped to achieve for analysands was freedom of choice – of a lover, of a career, not of political opinions . . .". The quotation from Freud is taken from one of his *New Introductory Lectures*, and the sentence which follows it reads: "It is a work of culture – not unlike the draining of the Zuider Zee."

If one examines carefully the origin of this image, it reveals just the connection between psychoanalytic freedom and political freedom that Gay would deny. As Thomas Mann observes in *Freud and the Future*, Freud's image involves an allusion to the end of *Faust*, Part Two, where Faust embarks on a project to drain the Zuider Zee. Faust's plan to tame the wild power of the sea parallels his own inner struggle for self-control:

Wild elements in aimless perturbation!
To soar beyond itself aspired my soul:
Here would I strive and this would I control.

Freud's reference to draining the Zuider Zee aptly recalls Faust's struggle to subject his passionate drives, his id, to the control of his rational ego. I imagine that Gay would have no problem with this individually oriented level of meaning in the allusion, since it perfectly coincides with the point of Freud's lecture. It is important to note, however, that Goethe's image of draining the Zuider Zee also has a wider social meaning and that Freud's own words, "It is a work of culture", point to this element and the parallel with *Faust*. In the drama, the land Faust reclaims from the sea provides a basis for the political freedom which inspires his dying vision of the future:

A paradise our closed-in land provides,
Though to its margin rage the blustering tides. . . .
Such busy, teeming throngs I long to see,
Standing on freedom's soil, a people free.

With the reference to the ideal of political freedom which played so important a role in the history of the Netherlands, Goethe established a clear relationship between Faust's inner quest for freedom from emotional tyranny and the political pursuit of freedom in the outer world of society and culture. A close look at Freud's image reveals a political substratum underlying his explanation of psychoanalytic theory, and this is the case in almost countless other images, analogies and dreams.

The existence of this political substratum does not imply that psychoanalytic theory was

in any sense an epiphenomenon of political history. Rather, I would say that what is at stake is the nature of creativity, not only in Freud's specific case, but perhaps in a more general way as well. Excavating the buried political allusions in Freud's writings and dreams suggests a subtle and complex interplay between the purely personal elements of the creative process and those which were rooted in his historical context. One may ignore the implications of this allusive language, but to do so impoverishes our understanding of Freud's relationship to his time.

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Shakespeare's Will

Sir, – In his review (November 14) of Charles Hamilton's *In Search of Shakespeare*, Chris Baldick refers to its "assertion" that Shakespeare's will is holographic. Is this really a fair word for a whole budget of arguments old and new, plus four pages of facsimile comparisons compellingly designed to show the identity between the will handwriting and that of the insurrection scene in *Sir Thomas More*? "Assertion" seems to me a much apter term for the claims of Samuel Schoenbaum, Stanley Wells and others that the will was written by one Francis Collins. This is not only unsupported by any fact or argument whatever; it is in flagrant contradiction with the verifiable evidence of Collins's hand in the Stratford archives – and indeed in the will itself, as pointed out by its custodian Dr Jane Cox in *Shakespeare in the Public Records* (1985).

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'The Orton Diaries'

Sir, – My review of *The Orton Diaries*, as printed in the TLS of November 14, contains a sentence to the effect that "the only person [Orton] didn't seem able to have sex with was Halliwell himself". This is quite wrong: Orton did have sex with Halliwell, as the diaries make plain. What Orton wasn't able to do was – well, what I actually wrote (and quoted from the book) was Whitehouse (out of my review, so I can hardly hope to smuggle it back in now in a letter. But I would refer the curious to the last line but one of the penultimate paragraph of the review, where the offending word has been retained.

TONY GOULD.
Covering End, Knowle House, Lustleigh, Newton Abbot, Devon.

Beckett's Plays

Sir, – Alan Jenkins, reviewing several books which marked Samuel Beckett's eightieth birthday (November 14), mentions "a handsome *Complete Dramatic Works*", published by Faber for the occasion last April, but he makes no attempt to review or even to describe it.

The point is that it isn't really new or complete. All the thirty-two plays in it have already been published. It consists of the *Collected Shorter Plays*, which appeared in 1984, together with the three longer plays (*Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and *Happy Days*). It includes no early unpublished plays and no later plays. Most important, perhaps, its version of *Waiting for Godot* is the expurgated translation which was performed at the Criterion Theatre in 1955 and published by Faber in 1956, rather than the original translation which was published by Grove Press in 1954 and performed at the Arts Theatre in 1955, and later performed at the Royal Court Theatre in 1964 and published by Faber in 1965: it gives no indication or explanation of this use of an imperfect text superseded more than twenty years ago. And it omits the less important but still interesting performing details of the original productions of the plays which were normally given when they were published separately.

So, while the book may be handsome and also handy, it is far from satisfactory, and the sooner it is replaced the better.

NICOLAS WALTER.
88 Islington High Street, London N1.

John Coile

COMMENTARY

Taking the author's part

Enrys Jones

LAURENCE STERNE/PETER BUCKMAN
Tristram Shandy
Oxford Playhouse

Despite all its self-conscious quirks, oddities and narrative disruptions, or even perhaps because of them, *Tristram Shandy* takes very easily to the stage. About ten years ago, in this same theatre, some talented undergraduates adapted it very successfully. This new version by Peter Buckman (produced by Richard Williams, for the Oxford Playhouse Company) is in some respects even better. Eighteenth-century novelists were still close to the theatre: they explored their new form dramatically. Sterne was as theatrically minded as any of them. Like Richardson, from whom he took so much, he had a marvellous eye for a good scene; what he also had was an unerring ear for dialogue, or rather just talk – not for nothing was he brought up in Ireland, like Congreve before him and any number of comic dramatists after. He was conscious too that he was living in an age of distinguished actors and was proud of his acquaintance with the greatest of them – “my dear friend Garrick”, he calls him at one point. *Tristram Shandy* contains two, or possibly three, great character-studies which, with no effort at all, can be turned into equally rich acting roles. And this is because, even when reading the book, we don't just listen to these characters talking – we watch them, as if we were already in a theatre. As a candidate for stage treatment, *Tristram Shandy* has a lot to be said for it.

Peter Buckman's version is strong because faithful to Sterne: most of the script – nearly all, as far as I could tell – is transcribed verbatim. A good many of the book's famous idiosyncrasies – at least those not inseparable from the layout of the printed page – find their

stage equivalent: only such things as the blank and marbled pages defy translation. But it must be conceded that the way time traced by Corporal Trim's stick (mutely expressive of so much) is less meaningful when seen on stage than when found between the covers of a book. Sterne's novel for the most part alternates between authorial disquisitions and self-contained “scenes”. The authorial parts, necessarily greatly pruned, are delivered here by Tristram himself in the form of choric interludes and bridge-passages. Whether in performance these passages could mean very much to someone who had never read the book is doubtful; but even to someone who has, they are not exactly the strongest parts of the play. Perhaps they should have been reduced even further or else given fuller development; as it is, they seem at times mere intrusions into the domestic drama which is sufficiently absorbing without them. Part of the trouble is that David Mallinson as Tristram seems as yet ill-at-ease in the part, not quite confident of his power to hold our attention; a strained roughishness of manner undermines what ought to be a much more masterful manipulation of audience-response.

The other characters, particularly the men, are more firmly in focus. Naturally, at stage centre, stand, or rather sit, the brothers Walter and Toby Shandy, locked in an eternal conversational impasse. Michael Turner (Walter) and Donald Peimear (Toby) have excellent moments; Peimear looks the part to perfection. Mr Walter Shandy perhaps needs an actor more heroic in build or at least in lungs to do justice to his louder rhetorical flights; Turner is best in his dumbfounded silence following the christening mishap and later in his oration on the qualities required by his son's tutor (unexpectedly funny, this, in delivery). But the most satisfyingly Sternean performances are given by Jim McManus, who has no fewer than four parts: two small ones (Yorick and Obadiah)

and two others much more extended (Corporal Trim and Dr Slop). As Trim and Slop, McManus is especially faithful to Sterne in the attention he gives to body-language. He creates two utterly distinct men, startlingly different in facial appearance, posture, gait and accent. His Slop is a genially brutal monster out of Rowlandson, at one moment poking his ferocious forepaws at the maid, at another frantically trying to undo the knots on his bag of obstetrical instruments, while upstairs without his help Mrs Shandy gives birth to Tristram. If Slop is Sterne's most Smollettian character, Trim is pure Sterne, gentle, sly, sweet-natured, libidinous, his big moments quite as delicate as anything in the brothers' dialogues. In fact Trim's long account of his involvement with the “Be-guine” and how he finally fell in love with her is the most riveting set-piece in the entire performance. McManus paces it beautifully.

Certain things are not attempted in Buckman's adaptation. It's mildly disappointing that he leaves out what is perhaps the finest episode in *Tristram Shandy* – “my brother Bobby's death”, with Mr Shandy's upstairs funerary eloquence matched, or rather out-matched, downstairs by Trim's “drop of a hat”. Still, a surprising amount of Sterne's flavour is caught. And Buckman adds something of his own. His two-act script is an elegant construct. Each act takes exactly one hour to perform. The first ends with a birth, the second with a death. And both acts mount finally to a flourish of almost Pirandellian self-consciousness: indeed the second act shows Tristram lying dead on the stage while the others stare at him aghast – five characters at the death of an author. What are they to do? How is it all to end? The play is none the less concluded on a thoroughly Sternean note of good-humour.

Beecham calendared

Denis Stevens

The full extent of Thomas Beecham's enormously active musical life is revealed in a *Calendar of his Concert and Theatrical Performances*, compiled by Maurice Parker and published privately for members of the Sir Thomas Beecham Society (46 Wellington Avenue, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex). This volume of almost 500 pages lists every concert, opera and ballet performance, and every recording session, which the compiler has been able to discover from source-materials spread over several continents, from 1899 until 1960. Judged by any standards, the record is staggering; and the more so when one realizes that these achievements took place in the pre-jet era.

Beecham, as a young man, served a double apprenticeship in writing and music for the simple reason that there was, at first, very little for him to conduct. Yet he was full of ideas about the performance of orchestral and operatic music, the kinds of repertoire that ought to be developed, and the conditions under which musicians should work.

While some of these ideas found expression in his writings and speeches, the main thrust was practical, as the *Calendar* clearly shows. Turning its pages, one can feel the energy level rising rapidly from year to year: only three concerts in 1906 and four in 1907, but the next year witnessed fourteen, including eight performances of five works by Delius, whose music was featured in Beecham's very last concert on May 7, 1960. The first and surely the most extraordinary of his many opera seasons was that of 1910, when over thirty works were

given a total of 190 performances, Beecham being assisted by Bruno Walter and Richard Strauss.

What emerges from this record is the breadth and depth of repertoire, embracing not only a full range of standard works but a considerable number of scores not usually associated with Beecham. The *Calendar* reveals that he conducted Mahler (1907, 1934), Bruckner (1937, 1953), Holst (1935), Britten (1945, 1951), Pfitzner (1937) and Bartók (1939). A singer who took part in a performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony stated that Beecham did not have too high a regard for “that piece”, but he conducted it at least seven times.

Schoenberg's name appears on a programme of 1935, but the Cello Concerto in question was his arrangement of a work by the eighteenth-century composer Monn. There is no middle or late Stravinsky, though Beecham seems to have given one of the earliest concert performances of *Apollo* in 1928. A professed distaste for the music of Bach is offset by the inclusion of several concertos (including one for harpsichord played by Ralph Kirkpatrick), *Phoebus and Pan*, and the St Matthew Passion. Of early music there is a generous sampling which puts many conductors to shame: Vivaldi, Leo, Manfredini, Tartini, Lully, as well as his favourites Pisselli, Méhul and Grétry. Some of the juxtapositions are remarkable, even daunting: in the summer of 1932, for example, while conducting a heavy Wagner season at Covent Garden, he managed to fit in a recording of Delius's *A Village Romeo and Juliet* for the BBC and a performance of a Handel ballet as an afternoon apéritif.

Nowadays only the “Assumption” tells us something of the young Mantegna's personality, first through the idealized, classical figure of the Virgin and the Donatellesque angels who surround her, and then through the apostles at the base, expressing, in Kristeller's vivid phrase, “psychic emotion by physical action, naturally and without exaggeration”. It testifies to the fact that Mantegna, in his early twenties, possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of classical motifs and an instinctive sense for the rhetoric of classical style. Something of this may have been learned, as Kristeller argued and as Lightbown claims in his interesting first chapter, in the house and workshop of Squarone. Squarone's bias, as we know from the few works which survive, was sculptural; in the Lazara altarpiece in Padua the lateral saints are posed like statues depicted from different points of view, and Squarone's “Madonna” in Berlin attests a sympathy with the emotive style of Donatello. But the phenomenon of the Ovettari frescos cannot be explained along these lines: it is intelligible only if we assume the presence behind them of Alberti. In Padua at this very time Alberti's architectural preconceptions were reflected in the “Miracle of the Miser's Heart” of Donatello; and concurrently his creative intelligence was making itself felt at Ferrara and at Rimini. Lightbown regards it as “most unlikely that Mantegna acquired any knowledge of Alberti's perspective during his visit to Ferrara in May 1449”, and suggests that a copy of the *Deella Pittura* “fell in Mantegna's way” in 1450 after the completion of the two upper frescos on the left wall of the Ovettari Chapel, and before the planning of the lower scenes. But much more than perspective was involved. Among works of which we have a record (this qualification is necessary since nothing is

Masterly transformations

John Pope-Hennessy

RONALD LIGHTBOWN
Mantegna
512pp, Phaidon/Christie's, £60.
07148 80310

This is a long, learned and highly personal book. Its text runs to over 250 pages of double columns – it is considerably longer, that is to say, than the standard Mantegna monograph of Paul Kristeller of 1901 (which is listed by Ronald Lightbown as a documentary source, but is omitted from his list of “principal monographs” . . . which for one reason or another should still be consulted”) – and it includes a hundred-page *oeuvre* catalogue. It is the work of a historian rather than an art historian, and its strengths and weaknesses spring directly from this fact. It makes, in detail, substantial additions to our knowledge of Mantegna, not through the publication of new documents but by a fresh review of literary sources and meticulous sifting of material already available, and it offers an incomplete, because a limited and rather doctrinaire, account of Mantegna's artistic personality.

Mantegna was a painter of great precocity. When he was sixteen he received the commission for an altarpiece for the Paduan church of Santa Sofia (rather confusingly the name of the church appears in Lightbown's notes but nowhere in his text), which looked, to Vasari's eyes, as though it were painted by an experienced artist, not a youth. In 1448, the year of its completion, he started work on the planning of the frescos in the Ovettari Chapel of the Eremitani in the same city. It is over forty years since the Ovettari Chapel was destroyed, and all that remains of its frescos today are the “Assumption” behind the altar, a few fragments of the St James cycle and the two scenes of the “Martyrdom of St Christopher” on the right wall. It is hard in retrospect to reconstruct the overwhelming impression that it made. It was a matter not simply of the interrelation of the individual frescos or pairs of frescos as they are known to us through photographs, but of their totality, which gave them a cool, timeless, almost sculptural character, and of the masterly planning of the wall surfaces. Confronted, like so many of his immediate predecessors, with the problem of transforming Gothic into Renaissance space, Mantegna created what, at the time it was produced, was almost certainly the most progressive system of fresco decoration in the whole of Italy.

Nowadays only the “Assumption” tells us something of the young Mantegna's personality, first through the idealized, classical figure of the Virgin and the Donatellesque angels who surround her, and then through the apostles at the base, expressing, in Kristeller's vivid phrase, “psychic emotion by physical action, naturally and without exaggeration”. It testifies to the fact that Mantegna, in his early twenties, possessed an encyclopaedic knowledge of classical motifs and an instinctive sense for the rhetoric of classical style. Something of this may have been learned, as Kristeller argued and as Lightbown claims in his interesting first chapter, in the house and workshop of Squarone. Squarone's bias, as we know from the few works which survive, was sculptural; in the Lazara altarpiece in Padua the lateral saints are posed like statues depicted from different points of view, and Squarone's “Madonna” in Berlin attests a sympathy with the emotive style of Donatello. But the phenomenon of the Ovettari frescos cannot be explained along these lines: it is intelligible only if we assume the presence behind them of Alberti. In Padua at this very time Alberti's architectural preconceptions were reflected in the “Miracle of the Miser's Heart” of Donatello; and concurrently his creative intelligence was making itself felt at Ferrara and at Rimini. Lightbown regards it as “most unlikely that Mantegna acquired any knowledge of Alberti's perspective during his visit to Ferrara in May 1449”, and suggests that a copy of the *Deella Pittura* “fell in Mantegna's way” in 1450 after the completion of the two upper frescos on the left wall of the Ovettari Chapel, and before the planning of the lower scenes. But much more than perspective was involved. Among works of which we have a record (this qualification is necessary since nothing is

known of Domenico Veneziano's frescos in Sant'Egidio in Florence or of Piero della Francesca's frescos at Ferrara), the Ovettari frescos offer the first proof of Alberti's ascendancy over mid-fifteenth-century fresco painting.

The only evidence we have for the creative process by which the individual frescos were produced is contained in a drawing in the British Museum which shows the figures in the fresco of “St James Led to Martyrdom” in shallow space. Features of the final scheme are already present in the Saint in benediction on the left, the standing soldier in the centre, and the two dominant figures on the right. But it also includes (as Lightbown points out) the standing figure of a paralytic man beside the Saint and a line of three receding figures on the right depicted on the same scale as the soldier in the foreground. In the fresco as it was executed the paralytic man was eliminated and replaced by a distant cityscape seen through the triumphal arch, and the receding figures on the right were pushed into the distance and lowered so that their heads are on the level of the buttocks rather than the head of the male figure in front. At the same time the foreground figure on the right was invested with an urgent forward movement bisecting the right corner of the composition. To this parsing of the design in three coherent blocks of figures, separated by spatial voids, the dramatic force of the whole scene is ultimately due. The brutal “Execution of St James”, where the figures of the prostrate saint and of the executioner are intensified by a central void, evidently resulted from calculation of the same kind. No doubt small panels, like the Uffizi “Presentation in the Temple”, evolved in the same way.

Despite the dated but ruined “St Euphemia” in Naples and the datable San Zeno altarpiece, the course of Mantegna's development in the 1450s is difficult to trace. The most useful contribution in this part of Lightbown's book is a careful re-examination of the evidence concerning the lost frescos in the Casa Gattamelata. He concludes that the schematic landscape of the London “Agony in the Garden” with what Johannes Wilde calls its “scholarly exploitation of visible forms” precedes the descriptive landscape of the same scene in the San Zeno predella, and, inevitably, he discusses its relation to the drawing of the same subject by Jacopo Bellini. The exact significance of Jacopo Bellini for Mantegna is unclear. What is involved is not only the rationalization of observation in his landscape drawings and his organization of nature as architectural space (both expressions are Degenhart's), but the figure content of the drawings. Lightbown notes that in the small “Ascension” in the Uffizi Mantegna follows the practice of the Ovettari “Assumption”, “setting the figure of Christ high up above the awestruck group of the Virgin and Apostles to convey the physical fact of his ascent into heaven”. But on a sheet in the Paris volume of Jacopo Bellini's drawings Christ is represented in the same way. The composition of the “Christ in Limbo” recorded in an engraving after Mantegna of the 1460s recurs in one of the Louvre drawings, and Jacopo Bellini's “Death of the Virgin” and “Christ nailed to the Cross” contain a first intimation of the concern with foreshortened recumbent figures which reaches its climax in Mantegna's Brera “Lamentation over the Dead Christ”. The Louvre drawings are commonly dated between 1430 and the mid-1450s, and it is anybody's guess whether these sheets are derivative or prove Jacopo Bellini to have generated ideas on which Mantegna later drew.

The section on the San Zeno altarpiece is less coherent than that on the Ovettari frescos. One reason for this is that a quantity of information that should have been relegated to the notes is spilled over the text. Ostrich eggs, the symbolism of the lamp, the significance of oil-lamps combined with ostrich eggs, fruit and “the still-life naturalism of their simulation”, the “didactic symbolism . . . enforced on the monks of San Zeno by the altarpiece”, succeed one another in bewildering sequence, and the chapter which results is a good deal inferior to the work of Puppi on the same altarpiece. One of the cruces in the study of the San Zeno altarpiece is its connection with the Padua altar of Donatello. “It is now usual to assert as proven fact”, writes Lightbown, not quite accurately, “that its design was borrowed from

Donatello's altar in the Santo.” The myth, propagated by Donatello scholars rather than by students of Mantegna, is that the San Zeno altarpiece offers some indication of the intended form of Donatello's altar. There is no proof that this is so, but the strong vertical of the Virgin and Child and the psychological linking of the lateral figures unmistakably reflect parts of the altar that are preserved today.

The second reason for the incoherence of the account is a critical deficiency. It is legitimate to describe paintings (a number of Lightbown's accounts of Mantegna's secular paintings are genuinely illuminating), but his descriptions of religious paintings are lengthy, obvious and parsonical. Thus we read of the Virgin and Child in the San Zeno altarpiece:

The Virgin's head is a smooth oval of singularly perfect outline, but a little broader than the narrow oval of Gothic art, in keeping with that solid sense of volumetric form already in the 1450s so typical of Mantegna's heads. The appearance of greater breadth is enhanced by the pleated veil, concealing a high smooth forehead which completed the oval according to a fifteenth century canon on beauty in women. . . . In contrast to the firm perfection of the Virgin's features, he has attempted to give the Child's flesh something of a child's soft and yielding suppleness. The broad, snub-nosed little face, the plump little arms and legs are constructed of forms creating a succession of small curves; the fat little belly sticks out with a swelling uncertainty of shape that imitates reality.



The Virgin and Child – a detail from Mantegna's San Zeno altarpiece; it is reproduced from the book reviewed here.

To whom is a passage of this kind addressed? Mantegna was a great religious imagist, and the peculiar character of his Madonnas does indeed require some explanation. But the standard demanded of the commentator was established eighty years ago by Roger Fry, in a magnificent essay on “Mantegna as a Mystic”, describing the Virgin in the Bergamo “Madonna” with her “mysterious, almost ironical smile”, and the Child in the “Simon Madonna” in Berlin with “the wizened face, the creased and crumpled flesh of a new-born babe . . . All the penalty, all the humiliation, almost the qualor attendant on being ‘made flesh’ are marked.” The Madonnas of Mantegna and Donatello seem to spring from one and the same current of religious thought. Its sources have not been traced (though at one time a painted reproduction of Donatello's Verona Madonna was naively credited to Mantegna), and they are not investigated here.

In April 1460 Mantegna moved to Mantua, and thereafter (save for a short period in Rome after 1487), functioned as a court artist. The three great commissions for which he was responsible, the Camera Piccola of the Ducal Palace, the cartoons of the Triumph of Caesar, and the paintings for the studio of Isabella d'Este, are the subject of three of the most satisfactory chapters in Lightbown's book. The cartoons have been the subject of an independent volume by Andrew Martindale, in which it was inferred (as it was 400 years earlier by Vasari) that the commission for them originated with Lodovico not Francesco Gonzaga. This is contested by Lightbown. It was also inferred by Martindale that the cartoons were executed over some sixteen years. Lightbown, on the other hand, deduces a working period of a little less than ten. He also challenges the assumption (followed by Martindale but originating with Kristeller) that the canvases “were intended to be mounted on a single long wall”.

The alternative view, of Paccagnini, is that they decorated three walls of the large *sala* of the Ducal Palace, and in this Lightbown concurs.

The evidence (and there is a great deal of it) is inconclusive, but it is clear that the cartoons, however they were finally hung, were intended to be read as a continuous film strip arranged sequentially. Enough of the paint surface in the individual scenes survives to establish the overpowering impetus of the designs. On a smaller, more assimilable scale this appears again in the grisaille “Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome”, in the National Gallery, which was painted for Francesco Correr and must, when it arrived in Venice at the end of 1506, have exercised a decisive influence on Titian.

On Mantegna's paintings for the Studio of Isabella d'Este, the “Parnassus” and “Pallas” in the Louvre, the most recent volume is by Verheyen, and here Lightbown again scores decisively, with a convincing demonstration that the invention of the two paintings cannot, as Verheyen supposed, be due to Equicola, but depends from the *Antierotica* of Pietro Hedo and the *Amores* of Fregoso, the Parnassus preceding and the Pallas following the issue of the latter book. Lightbown's description of the contents of these paintings is conspicuously good.

No scholarly catalogue of Mantegna's work has ever been produced, though E. Tietze-Conrat's *Mantegna, Paintings, Drawings, Engravings: Complete works* (1955), contains some scrappy notes on the works illustrated and summary catalogues are included in popular books by Cumesasca and Curavaglia. Lightbown's catalogue is especially welcome on this account; it is extremely detailed and, in the area of historical judgment, consistently reliable. A catalogue, however, involves more than summaries of the progress of major signed or documented works. Judgment is necessarily passed on a host of unsigned, undocumented paintings, and here Lightbown's verdicts are dogmatic and often wrong. His mind snaps down like a mousetrap on the “Virgin and Child with Cherubim” in the Brera (one of Mantegna's best-known and most beautiful paintings), and we read: “The attribution to Mantegna is very doubtful. It is difficult to reconcile its style with his work in the 1480s and 1490s.” The attribution is not doubtful, and could appear so only to a critic wedded to a schematic stereotype of Mantegna's work. Some of the paintings rejected by Lightbown are works already generally rejected from the Mantegna canon, such as the fine, Zoppo-like “St Jerome in the Wilderness” at São Paulo and the “St Jerome in Penitence” in Washington, but the Frankfurt “St Mark” has stronger claims to acceptance than are suggested by Lightbown's comment that “the type of the Saint is not idealized enough for the early Mantegna. The jewelled robe is also uncharacteristic, as is the treatment of the halo.” Uncharacteristic by what standard? A subjective notion of how Mantegna's earliest paintings might have looked if any of them happened to survive. The days are past when paintings could be judged without proper regard to their physical condition, and most self-respecting museums nowadays will give accurate accounts of the state of paintings in their charge. Advantage has not been taken of this fact. To take three examples from one museum, in the “Madonna and Child with Seraphim” in the Metropolitan Museum, the face of the Virgin and the seraphim on the left are new; any attribution must rest on those areas which are original, and these are clearly by Mantegna. With the late works on canvas the state of the paint surface is of special consequence. This problem is not faced up to with the Getty “Adoration of the Magi”, where we find only “paint surface rather worn”, or with the Altman “Holy Family with the Magdalen” in New York, which owes its poor press to its sunken paint surface, not, as implied in Lightbown's entry, to its inferior quality. The so-called “Portrait of Rodolfo Gonzaga” in the same museum, given by Tietze-Conrat on the strength of its colouring to a Venetian copyist and again discussed by Lightbown without reference to condition, is in all essentials a modern painting. The rule to be applied to this catalogue therefore is a simple one. When Lightbown accepts paintings, they are by Mantegna. When he rejects them, they may be by Mantegna too.

AMONG THIS WEEK'S CONTRIBUTORS

Derek Attridge is Professor of English Studies at the University of Strathclyde. He is the co-editor of *Post-Structuralist Joyce: Essays from the French*, which was published earlier this year, and has recently completed a new book, *Peculiar Language: Literature and Difference from the Renaissance to James Joyce*.

James Axell is the William R. Kenan, Jr Professor of Humanities and Professor of History at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. He is the author of *The Invasion Within: The contest of cultures in Colonial North America*, which was published last year.

John Bayley is Thomas Walton Professor of English at the University of Oxford. His *Pushkin: A comparative commentary* was published in 1971. His books include *The Users of Division: Unity and Disunity in Russian Literature, 1916, and Selected Essays*, 1984.

Jorge Calvo is Professor of Physical Chemistry at Cornell University and Professor of Physical Chemistry at the Technical University of Lisbon.

John Campbell is the author of *Ray Jenkins: A biography*, 1983. His forthcoming biography of Aneurin Bevan will be published shortly.

Hennig Cohen is Professor of English and History at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and currently Visiting Professor of English at King's College, London.

Joel Conroy, President of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, has previously been Executive Director of the Modern Language Association of America and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania.

Tim Dooley's first collection of poems, *The Interrupted Dream: Poems 1971-1984*, was published in 1985.

Donald Fanger is Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Harvard University. His most recent book is *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol*, 1979.

Peter Fowler is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. His books include *Approaches to Archaeology*, 1977, and *The Farming of Prehistoric Britain*, 1983.

Nigel Glendinning is the author of *A Literary History of Spain: The eighteenth century*, 1972, and *The Interpretation of Goya's Black Paintings*, 1978.

John Hemming is the editor of the two-volume *Change in the Amazon Basin*, which was published last year. He is also the author of *Red Grid: The conquest of the Brazilian Indians*, 1978.

Donal MacRae is the editor of *Poetry of the First World War: A casebook*, 1981.

Albert Hourani's most recent book is *The Emergence of the Modern Middle East*, 1981.

Ani Jefferson is a lecturer in French at St John's College, Oxford. She is the author of *The Nouveau Roman and the Poetics of Fiction*, 1980, and the co-editor of *Modern Literary Theory: A comparative introduction*, 1982. Her book on Stendhal is forthcoming next year.

Enrys Jones is Goldsmith's Professor of English at the University of Oxford. His *Scenic Form in Shakespeare*, 1971, was reissued in paperback last year.

John Kelly is a Fellow of St John's College, Oxford. He is the editor of *The Collected Letters of W. B. Yeats*, the first volume of which was published earlier this year.

Mary Lefkowitz's *Women in Greek Myth* will be reviewed in the TLS shortly.

Rubin Ofshe is a lecturer in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He is the editor of *Studies in Modern Arabic Literature*, 1976. He is currently working on a book called *Literature and Art in Modern Egypt*.

Peter Parsons is a lecturer in Papyrology at the University of Oxford.

Peter Porter's most recent collection of poems is *Fast Forward*, which was published in 1984.

Sir John Pope-Hennessy is Chairman of the Department of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. His most recent book, *Cellini*, was published earlier this year.

Tom del Re edited the Surrealist magazine *Arson* during the Second World War.

Daniel J. Singal is Associate Professor of History at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, New York, and is the author of *The War Within: From Victorian to Modernist thought in the South, 1919-1945*, 1982.

Dan Sperber's most recent books are *An Anthropology of Knowledge*, 1985, and *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, which was published earlier this year.

Charles Tomlinson is Professor of English at the University of Bristol. His *Collected Poems* was published last year.

Malcolm Warner was one of the organizers of the Royal Academy Exhibition *The Orientalists*, and co-author of the catalogue.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 304. Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than December 12. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct – in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked “Author, Author 304” on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on December 19.

1 Helen of Troy was beautiful
As tender flower in May,
Her loveliness from the towers looked down,
With the sweet moon for silver crown,
Over the walls of Troy Town,
Hundred of years away.

2 Often he wonders why, on earth he went
Troyward, or why poor Paris ever came.
Oft she weeps, gummy-eyed and impotent;
Her dry shanks twitch at Paris' mumbled name.
So Melelaus nugged; and Helen cried;
And Paris slept up by Scamander side.

3 “And where you pleased?” they asked of Helen in
Hell.
“Pleased?” answered she, “when all Troy's towers
fell;
When all the towers of the city were
down.”

And dead were Priam's sons, and lost his throne?
And such a war was fought as none had known:
And even the gods took part; and all because
Of me alone! Pleased? I should say I was!

Competition No 300
Winner: Anthony Cooper
Answers:

1 The two executioners stalk along over the knolls
Bearing two axes with heavy heads shining and wide.

And a long, limp two-handled saw toothed for
cutting great holes.

And so they approach the proud tree that bears the
death-mark on its side.

Thomas Hardy, “Throwing a Tree”

2 The blizzard felled the elm whose crest
I sat in; by a woodpecker's round hole.
The ploughman said, “When will they take it away?
‘When the war's over’! So the talk began –
Edward Thomas, “As the team's head-brass”

3 It is not for a moment the Spring is unmade
today;
These were great trees, it was in them from root to
stem.

When the men with the “Whoops” and the “Whoas”
have carried the whole of the whispering
loveliness away.

Half the Spring, for me, will have gone with them
Charlotte Mew, “The trees are down”

Competition 3000
Answers:
1. The first part of the poem is a parody of the opening of the poem “The Trees” by T. S. Eliot.

Coercing the unseen Powers

Peter Parsons

HANS DIETER BETZ (Editor)
The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation:
Including the demotic spells
Volume One: Text
339pp. University of Chicago Press. £33.95.
0226 0444 0

A EE III OOOO UUUUU may sound unpromising, as a summons to the powers of darkness. But Greeks thought highly of the alphabet; letters ranked among the elementary particles of the universe, standing close to those "invisible energies" which it was the magician's business (as Hans Dieter Betz writes in his elegant introduction) to "tap, regulate and manipulate". Greco-Roman magic, as we now see it, balances uneasily between potty, poetic and practical. But our view is necessarily cloudy. Contemporary documents are scarce. We have a scatter of imperishables, curses on lead and amulets on agate, from around the Mediterranean world; paper, in the uncut form of papyrus, survives only in Egypt, among the rubbish of the Greek-speaking settler-class which ran the country for ten centuries after Alexander. This book (conceived as part of the *Corpus Hellenisticum Novi Testamenti*) translates the papyri, as they appear in the edition of Preisendanz and Henrichs (1973-4), with a supplement of texts published since. It includes Egyptian (Demotic) as well as Greek, which is a great advantage; it seems to exclude the specifically Christian, whether Greek or Coptic, which is a pity.

The material comprises a small group of personal spells, and a larger group of handbooks (the bulk apparently from a single library). The spells concern themselves mostly with getting love and avoiding fever. The manuals prescribe for that, and much else besides. Hymns and rituals rub shoulders with folk medicine and party tricks: you learn how to become invisible and control your shadow, how to sum-

mon genies and get foreknowledge in dreams, how to attract friends and cause discord between enemies, how to win at the races, keep fleas at bay and eat garlic without stinking ("Bake beetroot and eat them"). The modern amateur who ventures on to this blasted heap of mumbo-jumbo will recognize some of the scenery. There are virgins and wax dolls, familiars and abracadabras, sacred herbs and ghoulish potions. There is a touch of Lovecraft about the Demiurge of the Seven Laughs, and the Headless Daimon who Sees with his Feet. There is even a breath of Middle Earth in a charm against inflammation: "seven springs of wolves, seven of bears, seven of lions; seven dark-eyed maidens with dark urns drew water, and becalmed the restless fire".

But the texts have more to offer than quaintness. The surviving fragments date, almost all of them, from late antiquity (third to fifth centuries AD); they show an extraordinary pooling (accidental confluence? or substantive synthesis?) of national traditions, in which Seth, Mithras, Apollo and Jehovah coexist. This conglomerate allows two sorts of analysis, both important for the history of ancient religion. We can ask what are the elements of the mix, where they came from and how they relate. If the ritual of the Idcean Dactyls goes back to the fourth century BC, it may be that the cosmopolitan mishmash preserves other traces of the dark unAryan doings which (it is assumed) must have underlain the bland and barbered mythologies of classical literature. If the casting out of demons looks much the same in the papyri as in the Gospels, it may be that we should see early Christian practice in this wider context. Miracles are magic; the magicians of Ephesus burned their books, because Paul outdid them in their own line. For a time, magic represented a rival Church; only later, with Christianity established, did it become an anti-Church. Alternatively we can take the conglomerate as we find it, and ask about the society behind the spells. Why are the documents so few? (The salvage yields twenty times as many texts of Homer.) It may be chance; or indifference; or simple prudence, for the Roman government regarded divination, at least, as socially undesirable and politically dangerous. Why are they so late? (The circulation of Homer peaks earlier.) It may be chance; or a revival of black arts in the imperial crisis, that "Age of Anxiety" which turned even philosophers to theurgy. Who were the customers, and why? "Ordinary men and women", says Professor Betz. Certainly many of the hazards contemplated will have been universal: scorpions, impotence, the desperate uncertainties of a world of plague and despotism in which only foreknowledge might save you (if you cease to dream, you have no future). When human agencies fail, the unseen Powers may be persuaded by prayer, or coerced by enchantment; even the weak can succeed, if they know the magic words. But there are oddities. Silver amulets: how many could afford them? Unrequited love: how many had the leisure (it is a luxury never mentioned in the private letters of the time)? People conjure for success in business, or to give their enemies insomnia; but not, it seems, to enhance their harvest, or hex their neighbour's donkey. One has sometimes the impression of Mayfair magic, the diversion of well-heeled, sex-crazed, urban rascals.

The texts, then, lead in many and important directions. But their fragmentary preservation and specialized jargon make them exceptionally unapproachable. Betz and his coven of translators have provided an indispensable companion. A sample check shows the inevitable scatter of negligences and imprecisions; and the new editors have not always transcended the lapses of earlier editions (the Homer Oracle, p 112, needs some reshuffling; the mysterious "marrow" of Hermes, p 312, is better read as the magic "mill"; the "early magical handbook" of p 301 turns out to be a verse epigram on the painter Apelles). But by and large the version shows care, skill and zest; the notes and glossary compress some new ideas, and much useful information, into a small space. A Greek index of words, and an English index of subjects, are to follow. Any worker in the field will welcome this sterling performance; any library concerned with ancient religions or Christian origins will need

Telling of great deeds

Penelope Murray

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The Crown of Song: Metaphor in Pindar
166pp. Duckworth. £18.
07156 20797
CHARLES SEGAL
Pindar's Mythmaking: The Fourth Pythian Ode
208pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press.
£16.10.
0891 054738

"No, I will not help you reinflate Pindar . . . I do not believe Pindar was the 67th part of Homer." So wrote Ezra Pound to W. H. D. Rouse in 1937. Fifty years on, the "prize wind-bag of all ages" has been fully reinflated: there are now more studies of Pindar appearing than of the *Iliad*. The search for unity in the odes which so preoccupied previous generations was largely diverted by the work of Elroy Bundy, whose genre-centred approach is the

also relates him to the poet. Though presented as a model of righteous behaviour, Jason is associated with guile and trickery: he wins Medea with the dubious help of Aphrodite's magic incantations, he accomplishes the tasks set by Aetces thanks to Medea's magic drugs and his own craft, and then steals her away. One of Jason's strengths, Segal suggests, lies in his ability to "use or receive the 'drugs' of language, love and magic in a positive way", to neutralize their potential dangers by the right use of craft and guile, countering them with the "good drug" of wise words. In this respect he resembles the poet.

Pindar's insistence on his ability to tell the truth has to be seen against the background of his awareness of poetry's power to seduce and deceive. Like his hero, the poet practises an "ambiguous pharmacology", aware of the "curative" and the "poisonous" aspects of his discourse. Both Steiner and Segal discuss Pindar's conception of poetry, but whereas Steiner takes the poet's reflections on his art at their face value, Segal regards them as altogether more ambiguous. For in emphasiz-



A Julio-Claudian prince from a relief on the Sebasteion. This photograph is taken from Kenan T. Erim's *Aphrodisias: City of Venus Aphrodite* (200pp. Multer, Blond and White. £35. 0 584 11106 1).

current orthodoxy. But if Pindar speaks to us today it is not because he is following the dictates of a genre. Both books under review, while recognizing the importance of Bundy's insights, seek the key to Pindar's greatness elsewhere. Deborah Steiner in his use of metaphor, Charles Segal in his myth-making. Recognition of the centrality of metaphor in the epicinoid odes is hardly new, and few would dispute Steiner's thesis that Pindar uses metaphor to unite past, present and future, to confer lasting fame on the fleeting moment of victory, and to reflect on his own role as poet. Her discussion of Pindar's recurrent images in terms of modern views of metaphor as interaction eloquently demonstrates the inadequacy of attempts to assign a single term of reference to any given image (a method not always confined to the ancient scholiasts): to seek, for example, the "real" identity of the Theban eagle in *Nemean 3* is to misunderstand the "fluid" character of Pindaric metaphor and indeed the nature of metaphor itself. If this intelligent book encourages close reading of the text to see how Pindar's metaphors operate at the verbal level that will be an achievement.

Segal's book is more ambitious in scope, more subtle in approach and more difficult to read. The author describes it as a "relatively non-Bundyst work" which may appear unfashionable to some: unfashionable it may be in terms of Pindaric studies, but it is certainly not so in its application of modern critical theory to ancient poetry. The central focus of the book is *Pythian 4*, Pindar's longest and most elaborate epicinoid ode, written to celebrate the victory of Arceasillaus of Cyrene in a chariot race in which forty drivers crashed, but also to plead for the restoration of the exiled Damophilus.

Through detailed and perceptive analysis of verbal echoes, imagery, thematic parallels and contrasts, Segal shows how Pindar characteristically weaves analogies between the legendary expedition of the Argonauts, the historical foundation of Cyrene and the present Jason; the mythical hero can be seen as a paradigm for both Arceasillaus and Damophilus but his ambiguous Odyssean heroism

ing the intricate, daedalic nature of his craft, Pindar draws attention to the artificiality of his own construct. The ostensible aim of *Pythian 4* is to praise the victor by immortalizing his deeds in song, but Pindar also indicates the gap between the precarious nature of human success and the eternal world of the gods. According to Segal, although a parallel is suggested between Arceasillaus and Jason, the very openness of the poem's analogical associations also makes it possible to equate him with the devious and evil Pelias "at least as a momentary paradigm in the negative hermeneutic". But he is careful not to discard the historical perspective, stressing that however sensitive the modern reader may be to the negative potential in Pindar's text we should not lose sight of his dominant emphasis, "the immortalization of great deeds in a framework of mortal limitations and moral order". Segal's combination of classical erudition with modern critical analysis may provoke disagreement, but will certainly encourage thought.

Segal makes the important suggestion that Pindar's self-consciousness about his own craft and artistry indicates a "new mentality of poetic creation" which reflects his intermediate status between oral and literate composer. Poised between the poetics of "presence" and the poetics of textuality, he has both a "pneumatological" and a "grammatological" consciousness of his art; in other words, he is aware of both the divine and the human origins of his work. But if Pindar is aware of this dual aspect of poetic creation, so too is Homer. Segal's opposition of the oral and inspired versus the textual and crafted is seductive in its simplicity, but it does not do justice to the self-awareness of the composer of the *Odyssey*; it also overlooks the fact that before Plato the Greek poets themselves regarded inspiration and craft as complementary rather than contradictory aspects of the creative process. Pindar's preoccupation with his craft may well reflect a transitional stage between an oral and a written poetics, but one should not underestimate the continuity in early Greek attitudes to poetry: as Pound recognized, Homer was Pindar's master.

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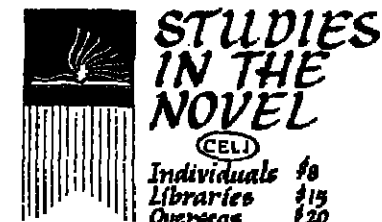
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A change of venue: Russian journals of the Emigration

Donald Fanger

Serious Russian-language periodicals – latter-day descendants of the nineteenth century's *zhurnaly* or "hefty journals", and mirror images of their Soviet counterparts – are currently published in Paris, New York, Munich and Tel Aviv (a number of them, one gathers, thanks to an enlightened policy of Western quasi-governmental subsidy). Many are of fairly recent origin, and even the older ones now bear the stamp, in language and outlook, of the so-called "third wave" of emigrants – scholars, writers and professionals who came to the West, most of them with visas for Israel, in the 1970s. Unlike the first wave, those who fled the Revolution and Civil War, or the second, displaced persons who found themselves in the West at the end of the Second World War and chose to remain there, these are people of entirely Soviet formation, who came to the West, and for a while remained in hopeful communication with those they left behind. Their very leaving is a product of that revolution of rising expectations which, triggered by de-Stalinization "thaw" of the 1950s, reached its apex in the dissident movement of the late 1960s with its proliferating unofficial publications inside the Soviet Union (*samizdat*) and abroad (*tamizdat*). Since the arrival of the third wave in the West, their writing has been, in many ways, an unconstrained continuation of what began in the heyday of *Novy Mir* (1954-6), when that Moscow journal was publishing the likes of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Andrei Sinyavsky, Viktor Nekrasov and Vladimir Voinovich.

A continuation in freedom. But here the paradoxes begin, for nothing is more disconcerting to a Russian experience than freedom. The former dissidents have been quick to build themselves a new ghetto in the West, and to subdivide it into zones. Occasionally it shows signs of turning into a Beirut of words. (C'est? Russians have always known that words are a reality of their own. They have suffered and died for them.)

I do not propose to characterize individual journals or the spectrum they constitute, since that is brilliantly and authoritatively done in Michel Aucouturier's "Les Revues de l'émigration et de la dissidence russes" (*Le Monde*, February 1981), an article that five years later requires only minor updating. What follows instead is an outsider's view of the émigré press and the ways that Russian traditions contribute to its peculiar features.

"hefty journals", each issue hundreds of pages long and encyclopaedic in scope, which came to Russia shortly before the middle of the

last century, served as platform and recruiting ground for the intelligentsia, that group so important in Russian culture, so different from what are called intellectuals in the West, so repeatedly the subject of vain attempts at definition.

Being an *intelligentskiy* was an identification, parallel to but transcending one's class or professional or ethnic identification. It denoted membership in an ideally conceived group, not necessarily of educated people in any formal sense, but of people who enjoyed the gift of literacy and treated it as a gift, to be deserved retroactively by the uses to which it was put. These were severely moral and inescapably social; they centred on the struggle for social justice – Isaiah Berlin has called the intelligentsia a state within the state – but had little to do with pragmatic politics. On the other hand, they had everything to do with denouncing the ills of present-day Russia – in the name of an ideal, eventual Russia which it was the intelligentsia's mission to conceive, in itself and in its relation to Western Europe. For a significant portion of the émigré press, these concerns have, understandably enough, become central once again.

So, it seems, has the traditional intelligentsia attitude towards writing, which held that important subjects deserve not only serious but earnest, and not only earnest but lengthy treatment. Noticeable attention to form seemed to signal vanity or frivolity in the writer, whereas a certain ungainliness in expression, reproducing the ebb and flow of passionate conversation, could be taken as a warrant of sincerity. The result was to canonize a manner of writing that set no store by succinctness and regarded its readers, no less than its subjects, as inexhaustible.

Habituation to the Soviet press, alongside unfamiliarity with non-Russian alternatives, only reinforces such tendencies and carries with it moreover – often unconsciously – the assumption, "He who is not with us is against us." This in its turn encourages a certain clannishness, as much personal as ideological, whereby freedom of the printed word is recognized as a thing so valuable as to be best reserved for the use of one's fellow-parishioners.

So the major newspapers and journals, perhaps a dozen in all, with circulation figures that range from the hundreds to 5,000 and an actual readership hard to estimate (made up of the contributors themselves, Western Slavists, perhaps a few clandestine readers in the homeland, and a certain number of general readers in the emigration whose ranks seem bound to shrink over the next decade or two), flourish outwardly as a great archive, to be winnowed some time in the future, perhaps by readers in a more liberal Russia that will be able to incorporate this severed branch of their literature into the culture of which it unquestionably forms a part.

For the time being, however, the émigré press seems destined to remain a unity only in principle – no more than the sum of its parts. "Nobody listens to anybody else", a recent observer of the scene complains: "Publications don't elicit responses." On the purely literary side, there is a good deal of reviewing, often personal in tone and approach. But one looks in vain for the kind of sustained, disinterested criticism that could make non-Metropolitan Russian literature a healthy institution, or could use the unique position of émigrés to treat the serious writing done on both sides of Soviet borders as the single thing many believe it to be.

In matters of commentary and opinion, virtually any point of view may find publication in the "appropriate" journal. But dissenting views are likely to be published, if at all, only in the correspondingly "appropriate" journals. Pluralism (a highly charged and imperfectly understood concept) seems to be approved and practised almost exclusively in this form. The émigré press has yet to establish a forum for principled exchanges of the kind provided by the Western organizers and publishers of conferences at the University of Geneva in 1978 and the University of Southern California in 1981 (see, respectively, Georges Nivat, ed. *Odna ili dve russkikh literatury?* ["One Russian Literature or Two?"], Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1981), and Olga Matich, ed. *The Third Wave: Russian literature in emigration* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1984)).

A striking case involving all these features has just emerged, moving from the pages of the Tel Aviv journal, 22, to those of the Paris-based *Continent*, and probably destined to involve still other publications before it runs its course.

22, a quarterly identified on its title-page as "a social-political and literary journal of the Jewish intelligentsia from the USSR in Israel", carries in its current issue a long article by one Sergei Khmelitskiy, hitherto unknown as a writer, entitled "Out of the Belly of the Whale". In it the author, now reportedly an emigrant in West Berlin (22 provides no information about the provenance of the article, or the editorial process through which it passed), rejects the fictionalized portrait of himself in the last chapter of *Goodnight, Andrei Sinyavsky's* "novel" about his life as a writer in the Soviet Union. (First published in Paris two years ago and reviewed in the TLS of February 15, 1985, the book is due to come out in English next year.)

That chapter, "In the Belly of the Whale", features a character called only "S" or "Seryozha", who is presented as an early friend of the narrator, "my brave mentor ... [who]

served as my Virgil in the art galleries" – an aesthetic *Wunderkind* who "thought like a jeweller", and who is ultimately made to symbolize the kind of disinterested perfidy that became endemic under the pressures of late Stalinism.

The amalgam of fact and phantasmagoria in Sinyavsky's novel is characteristic of the writing he publishes under the pen name of Abram Tertz. "Real" names, characters and incidents figure in it throughout, and the first-person narrator is often referred to by Sinyavsky's own name and patronymic. Less a novel that resembles a memoir than a memoir with novelistic sins and embellishments, it uses the latter to achieve a greater fidelity both to the spirit of the times (that "magical Stalinist night") and to the author's conviction that any attempt to capture the truth of so improbable a time must respect the way "fantasy" and "reality" interpenetrate each other inextricably. (One sign of this is the appearance of two names on the title-page of the French edition: Sinyavsky's and that of his literary persona, Tertz.) As regards "S" in the book, he is identified as having sent two young historians, Bregel and Kubo, to the camps through the regular reports of their conversations he made to the secret police.

Bregel and Kubo exist, and Khmelitskiy names them in his article as the objects of "my irredeemable sin". Though vague about what he actually did once he had been frightened into collaboration with the secret police, he is clear in summary: "Thus I purchased freedom and perhaps life for myself at the price of the freedom of two of my comrades – who were, of course, guilty of nothing. At that time the desire to live was very strong in me – excessively, inhumanly strong." The two, arrested in 1949 and sentenced to ten years, served five before being freed in the relatively liberal aftermath of Stalin's death. "But long before their release I had acquired the reputation of a traitor and informer: the investigators, it turned out, had not concealed my name from their charges. And the due punishment" – total ostracism by his erstwhile friends – "was quick and inevitable. It came to me in final form when Kubo and Bregel returned to Moscow. It was then that I reaped in full measure the fruits of my base spinelessness and cowardice. But enough about that."

Before and after this admission, Khmelitskiy is at pains to attack the portrait of "S" in Sinyavsky's book as "a blatant slander ... on my modest person", to "fill in what [Sinyavsky] omitted and restore the truth where he lied" – and, in the process, to attack the portraitist: "It is not so much a matter of me as of [Sinyavsky] himself; of his character, his weaknesses, and that desire to protect himself which is so normal for a man with his past."

Slander there cannot have been in any Western sense of the word (though we should re-

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member that "slunder of the Soviet Union" is a serious crime in that country), but in the growing confusion some things at least are clear. One literary text (Sinyavsky's) has engendered what has to be regarded as another (Khmelnitsky's), both of which vividly characterize a particularly dreadful period in recent history. Or one could say, in another sense, that the reality which generated the first text may have generated a second in the same mode, but with different motives. For Khmelnitsky's piece passes quickly from personal confession to denigration of Sinyavsky as man and writer, both directly and by innuendo. Only a few readers might have recognized the real individual behind the stylized portrait of "S", but all of Khmelnitsky's readers are invited to savour the attack on a writer, critic, scholar, and university lecturer whose career is now at its zenith.

In a more benign atmosphere one might be tempted to associate this spectacle ironically with Cervantes's sly stratagems for broaching the problem of a fictional character's authenticity. But a different set of questions is at issue here, some of them related to the poetics of the "non-fiction novel", some arising from the Russian reader's fascination with prototypes (imagine Nechaev claiming that Dostoevsky had slandered him in the figure of Peter Verkhovensky), some having to do with the boundary, so remarkably porous for the intelligent readers of Russian nineteenth-century novels, between fiction and reality. And beneath them all, contaminated with them all, are issues of factual accuracy and moral probity.

Among the journals

Book collecting

The Book Collector
Volume 34, No 4: winter 1985; Volume 35, No 3: autumn 1986
£18 per year. The Collector, 90 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PY.

The Book Collector comes somewhere between the austere scholarly rigour of *The Library* and the rather more practical and trade-orientated *Antiquarian Book Monthly Review*. It is a handsomely produced journal, which in its own right has become a collectors' item. There is an air of gentlemanly agreeableness about it (its book reviews are, on the whole, rather generous), and some areas of its coverage, especially the opening editorial essay and the "News and Comment" sections, can sometimes seem magisterially bland and ingratiatingly cosy. Book collectors, dealers, librarians and scholars do have to try to get on with each other, but it would be a welcome change if some of them were once in a while exposed as cheats, dupes, fools and knaves. There are, however, in these recent issues two suicides, an attempted murder and a photograph of a dog in an engaging account of the American collector Cortlandt F. Bishop and the end of the American-Anderson Galleries—but that was all in the United States and took place mainly before the last war.

There is a little more excitement in Germaine Warkentin's rather long account of the reasons behind the replacement of the first "bad" quarto of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella*, 1915, by a new edition of the sonnet sequence in the same year. The only intellectual violence in these issues takes place in two articles in which W. J. Partridge, a retired printer, and Paul Needham of the Pierpont Morgan Library quite literally slug it out as to whether the 1460 Mainz *Catholicon* was printed from movable type or using two-line cast slugs. The exchange is particularly interesting because of the practical details involved in the arguments and the different backgrounds of the writers.

Some of the most valuable material in *The Book Collector* appears in the regular articles. "English and Foreign Bookbindings" consists of a plate and a short description, usually by Mrian Foot; "Some Uncollected Authors" offers short bibliographical accounts of neglected writers (here of the Wilshire essayist Edith Oliver by David Gilsen, the bibliographer of Jane Austen); "Unfamiliar Libraries", which often contains new discoveries in

Khmelnitsky's piece, published in the forty-eighth issue of 22, carries a preface by Aleksandr Voronel, a mathematician and member of the editorial board, entitled "The Right to be Heard". Denying absolute moral distinctions, Voronel argues that there are only degrees, and declares that there is only one place to look for evidence of them: "In literature, where else?"

The word seems to be used here in the broadest possible sense, for Voronel refers to "the endless collective confession which is essentially what the Russian-language press in the West amounts to". Though it appears, he adds, that "there may soon be no one to read it... we see our task as being precisely to ensure that it exist", "that the historical testimony to the existence of our generation be preserved in all its fullness, without exceptions".

Hisself part of the same circle of friends and well-wishers around Sinyavsky which at one time included Khmelnitsky, Voronel recalls how, once his guilt was established, "we crossed Sergei out of our lives.... But he reappeared unexpectedly in the pages of Sinyavsky's novel, *Goodnight!*. Of course we recognized him.... And now he himself has sent us his manuscript... which, though it bears a literary character, is a human document [my italics]. We do not feel that we have the right to ignore it" — even though he declares

that it brings nothing new to one's estimate of Sinyavsky's writing, and even though the factual side of the case has "no very deep interest". What is important is the terrible psychological truth about personal relations under Stalin that emerges from juxtaposing Khmelnitsky's account with Sinyavsky's.

Here the confusion deepens, for Khmelnitsky's testimony purports to be concerned only with the factual side of the case. To regard it as literature is to ignore its intention — quite as much as arguing about the factual accuracy (rather than the poetic justice) of *Goodnight!* is to ignore the patent intentionality of that book.

None the less, we have, at this point, proliferating texts and subtexts, ill-assorted and inevitably emotional, involving questions of art and its sources, as well as of accusation, guilt and repentance, sincerity and deviousness, free speech and disinformation. Contexts continue to shift kaleidoscopically. The latest issue of *Kontinent* (one of the largest and most widely read of Russian reviews in the West, and bitterly antagonistic towards Sinyavsky) prints in the space reserved for the editor's column what it terms "a curious letter from the literary scholar Mr A. Sinyavsky", written in the belief that *Kontinent* was planning to reprint Khmelnitsky's article, and seeking to defend the factual (rather than the artistic!) accuracy of his characterization of "S" in *Goodnight!*. In doing this he includes, verbatim, letters recently addressed to him by "two principal witnesses" of the events in question — Hélène Pelletier-Zamoyska and Yuri Bregel — "who are also characters in my novel".

The first of these writes of Khmelnitsky that "he failed to notice that you were writing not exact memoirs... but precisely a novel, where personalities and events are in many respects transformed in a fantastic spirit". However, it is the truthfulness of Sinyavsky's account of his own behaviour that she emphasizes, comparing it to that of a hero of Solzhenitsyn's *The First Circle*. Bregel's testimony similarly centres on historical fact, concluding that the portrait of "S" in the novel matches exactly the man as he knew him. Neither addresses Khmelnitsky's text as such, or Voronel's arguments in favour of printing it.

As might be expected, *Kontinent's* editor, Vladimir Maksimov, seizes the opportunity to ironize over the oddity of Sinyavsky's having addressed his journal, and he prints at the end a note to him from Hélène Pelletier-Zamoyska requesting that he publish an amplified version of her letter to Sinyavsky, in which she clarifies some points in the original. Commenting sarcastically on the strangeness of "addressing corrections to a deeply personal letter not to its addressee but to a social-political and literary journal", he promises publication in the next issue.

"Life is, in general, the expectation of what will be written", Sinyavsky-Tertz writes prophetically in *Goodnight!*. Borne on currents of politics — literary, personal and ideological — the case of "S" continues to expand strangely and irrelevantly. In this, as in the neglected richness of its complex implications, it might be seen as exemplifying the current situation of the Russian émigré press.

Women's studies

Turn-of-the-Century Women
Volume 2, Nos 1 and 2: summer and winter 1985
\$10 per year. Department of English, Wilson Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia 22903.

Turn-of-the-century women — those who flourished within a decade or so of the year 1900 — merit study because of the way in which they confronted issues which are still alive and, perhaps more importantly, because they produced a large body of material both published and unpublished. As the journal's editorial states: "We shall attempt to discover new truths about this critical juncture in our past and to discover aspects of it that scholars have overlooked." Poetry, fiction, autobiography, journalism, even literary criticism by women of that period are scrutinized in *Turn-of-the-Century Women*. The editorial stance of the journal is firmly but not aggressively radical: the published material is shown as illuminating feminist attitudes, and there are plenty of literary curiosities too. In Volume 2, No 1: a brief essay on the career of Florence Hemmiker, Thomas Hardy's "One Rare Fair Woman", an interesting one of her melancholy romances, "An Hour in October"; it is described as being in the tradition of Jane Austen's *Persuasion* and Mrs Gaskell's *Cranford* and as having "the novels of Jean Rhys and Anita Brookner as its heirs". Englishwomen's diaries of the First World War (Beatrice Webb, Vera Brittain, Cynthia Asquith, Lady Ottoline Morrell) in the same issue suggest a theme which is amplified in the article "Feminism and Pacifism in World War I" in Volume 2, No 2. The lives of Florence Dixie and Mary Kingsley and their writings on Africa are mined for political implications in Volume 2, No 1 by Catherine Stevenson, who makes a convincing case for a link between "female anger" and African politics. The fiction of writers such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Zora Neale Hurston, Kate Chopin and Elizabeth von Arnim is examined and discussed. A slightly sardonic piece on "Fiction's Best Revenge" — portraits of Henry James by Vernon Lee, Mrs Ward, Edith Wharton and Olive Garner — seems to exemplify the rewarding sphere which the journal covers. Each issue also contains Books Received, Reviews and Announcements.

Lindsay Dugan

Children's literature

Children's Literature in Education
Volume 17, No 1
\$15 per year. Agathon Press Inc, 49 Sheridan Avenue, Albany, NY 12210.
UK subscriptions (£10) from 2 Sunwise Place, Exmouth, Devon.

Despite the limitations suggested by its title, *Children's Literature in Education* has a wide brief to look at any aspect of children's literature published in the United States or Great Britain. The journal's transatlantic editorship (it has an editorial board in the United States under the Editor Anita Moss of the University of North Carolina and a British editorial committee based at the School of Education at the University of Exeter) influences its treatment of children's books, which are always regarded as literature, that is, material for analysis. Discussions are most frequently oriented towards the therapeutic value of the books for the child. Critical methodology is applied to a range of authors which takes in both Enid Blyton and Lewis Carroll, but which most commonly encompasses modern authors of the 1970s and 80s. A typical issue recently looked at "vision, experience" in a novel for older readers written in 1980, with references to Flannery O'Connor and William Blake, and at "implied values" of a picture book by Shel Silverstein. The same issue contained the contributions by Peter Dickinson, Catherine Storr and Gillian Klein to a Bookquest Conference held in Brighton in 1984. Some of the material seems to promise more than it gives and there is often a speciousness about the themes; but *CLE* can be rewarding and for British readers it must have a certain rarity value in an undersubscribed field. If nothing else, it is edifying, not to say shameful, to see how many academics of professional standing are teaching courses in children's literature in the United States.

Elizabeth Barry

The Fall 1986 number of *The Georgia Review* (Volume XL, number 3; 842pp. University of Georgia, Athens; Georgia 30602 USA: \$4 or \$9; per year's subscription) is a fortieth anniversary Poetry Retrospective, containing work by some 120 poets.

Politics and world affairs

Survey: A Journal of East and West studies
Volume 29, No 2, summer 1985. £17 per year.
Ward House, 133 Oxford Street, London W1.

The latest issue of *Survey* has an essay, "Our Pluralists", by Alexander Solzhenitsyn criticizing the ideas of some of the recent arrivals from the Soviet Union, including Andrei Sinyavsky. The points of contention may seem a little esoteric but the issues raised — for instance, whether it was Marxism-Leninism or the Russian historical experience that was responsible for Soviet totalitarianism — are obviously of considerable general interest. James F. Pon-tano contributes an illuminating article on Solzhenitsyn's portrayal of Stalin, both in his novels and in his journalism: there is some ambiguity as to whether Solzhenitsyn sees Stalin as a political psychopath or as a faithful exponent of Lenin's mission. Leszek Kolakowski inquires into how it was that Communism despite its known "excesses" was able to inspire so many creative writers and artists. And there are stimulating pieces by Elliot R. Goodman and Paul Lendvai on the prospects ahead for Soviet society.

The journal's claim to distinction is not only that it publishes rigorous yet readable analyses of crucial and economic trends within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; nor that it has put the Soviet experience in context by consistent weaving the vicissitudes of the Communist movement since the days of Karl Marx and the first International; nor that its range is broad enough to cover the conflicts and contradictions within Western foreign policy (the critical essays it has run over the years, such as the harsh but fair dissection of the assumptions behind Henry Kissinger's *Realpolitik*, have been important contributions to public debate about *détente*, arms control, East-West trade and linkage and so on). Rather, *Survey's* reputation is based on its powerful historical sense, on its portrayal of Communism as a culture: not merely as a system of beliefs, fears, hopes and aspirations that have been transmitted from generation to generation over several centuries and which finally came to fruition in the Revolution of 1917, but as a physical and spiritual challenge that has demanded the most extraordinary feats of intellectual and moral courage from people who, through no fault of their own, have had to live, think and write under Communism.

Survey's uniqueness lies in its sense of historical urgency. Coming into being in 1955, just when — for the first time since 1917, and possibly even 1789 — the myth of Revolution appeared to be losing its mesmerizing power for the cleverest and most creative men and women in Europe, *Survey* has never contented itself with merely pointing to the deficiencies of Communism in practice: Look how low the Soviet rate of growth is! Look at their health care — it's a shambles! And just examine these demographic figures — they show that people living under Communism have a much lower life-expectancy than those living under capitalism! There has been some of that, of course, but it has never constituted the major thrust of *Survey*, which has been both to reflect and to influence events: to record the increasing failure — in the East and in the West — of the collectivist ideal to stir the imagination, and to trace the ideal's origins in the political and cultural history of Europe. And thereby also to replace it! And if so with what? But that is too difficult a task for intellectual journalism alone, however high its standard may be.

If there is a weakness in *Survey*, then it must lie in its own kind of "historicism". History is not necessarily on *Survey's* side. The future is uncertain: Gorbachev may yet succeed in revitalizing the Soviet Union; the myth of the Revolution has not quite disappeared (indeed the events of 1986 came as a surprise to *Survey* and its readers); it has never been wholly convincing in its attempts to explain (if away); the impact of the Soviet bloc countries, such as Solzhenitsyn, Kolakowski, Brodsky, Amalrik, Sinyavsky and others, may begin to fade away; the American ideal which in many ways had inspired Western Europe since 1945 may turn very sour indeed. If the hoped-for prosperity fails to materialize, . . . One could go on listing such possible detours in the movement of history. Therefore it is always important to remember that the experiences of one generation exert only limited influence on succeeding generations. One must withstand the temptation of becoming the stern parent boring one's offspring by constant reminders of how difficult one's own life had been. That said, *Survey* under the editorship of Leopold Labedz remains the most outstanding journal dealing with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the impact of revolutionary theory and practice in our time.

George Szamuely

Foreign Affairs
Volume 65, No 1
\$28 per year. P.O. Box 2615,
Boulder, Colorado 80321.

Foreign Affairs, published five times annually by the Council on Foreign Relations, is sixty-four years old this autumn. Since the early 1970s (before which it had a reputation for dullness), this robustly elegant journal has been much respected and powerfully influential. It has intimately reflected the changing character of American foreign policy since the Second World War, and has regularly published essays by Secretaries of State and Defense, National Security advisers, and American elder statesmen. Much of its value for politicians, journalists, scholars, etc. lies in the fact that it explores in depth the international role of the world's most powerful country, the United States. Some of *Foreign Affairs's* highlights have been George F. Kennan's celebrated article of 1947, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct", which articulated the policy of containment underlying the Truman Doctrine; William P. Bundy's editorial encouragement of writings on the role the United States should play in the world of the 1970s (in 1979 Bundy introduced into the journal a yearly overview, "America and the world"); two controversial essays — one on the "No First Use" of nuclear weapons (1982), the other on SDI (1984), both written jointly by McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara and Gerard Smith; and Andrei Sakharov's eloquent article, "The Danger of Thermonuclear War", published in 1983.

In the latest issue, Walter Laqueur's article "Reflections on Terrorism" is, as usual, wisely perceptive, if somewhat unfocused. "What to do about South Africa?", written by two of the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group, Malcolm Fraser and Olusegun Obasanjo, urges the United States and Great Britain to take strong action against South Africa but is a little unconvincing as to the efficacy of such action. There are two outstanding pieces of analysis. A. James McAdams's article on *Ostpolitik* is a clear and precise exposition of how West Germany has become hostage to the gains it has won from the improvement in relations between the two Germanies. And A. Doak Barnett's "Ten Years After Mao" charts the attempts of Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic leadership to secure political and economic cohesion and to move away from totalitarianism to "pluralistic authoritarianism". Joseph S. Nye comments on the compromise that President Reagan must make with the Soviet Union if he is to withstand pressures within his Administration to abandon the arms control process altogether; and there is a rigorous debate in the letters section between three groups of American scientists on the "nuclear winter".

Lucy Selon-Watson

Literature

Keats-Shelley Journal
Volume 35, 1986
\$12.50. Room 815, 41 East 42nd St, New York, NY 10017.

The *Keats-Shelley Journal* is the annual publication of the Keats-Shelley Association of America. It is not, however, as its title appears to suggest, either just a specialist journal for scholars or the bulletin of a literary clique. Although the journal succeeds in being both of those it is also something more. Under the editorship of Stuart Curran it has taken its place as an important journal of the second generation of Romantics, both distinguished in

its scholarship and impressively up to date in its reviews.

The *Journal* serves a number of purposes. The News section, for instance, captures well the atmosphere of some of the more informal and secular activities of the Association: fundraising, tours of Italy, concerts, conferences, exhibitions, award-givings, plaque-raising and annual dinners; while the Notes section deals with points and queries of bibliographical and biographical interest, which are often beautifully illustrated from details of manuscripts or photographs of Keats's and Shelley's residences. Each issue also carries a good bibliography of current publications.

The *Journal's* articles and reviews are by no means restricted to the two titular poets of the Association, but cover many areas of Romanticism, from biographical and editorial works to studies of post-structuralist theory. There are seven or eight articles in each issue, as well as fifteen or more lengthy and careful reviews of recent publications. These are of a high quality, and seem refreshingly undogmatic in their positions. The *Journal* can thus accommodate and focus the many contending varieties of Romantic criticism, and encourage the theoretical debate which has found in this period so rich and responsive a subject. As a work of reference to current studies in Romanticism, the *Keats-Shelley Journal* is invaluable.

Angela Leighton

Journal of the Short Story in English
No 6: Spring 1986
155F per year. Presses de L'Université d'Angers, Bibliothèque Universitaire, Boulevard Lavoisier, 49045 Angers, France.

This journal is becoming more English by the year. In 1984 it was called *Les Cahiers de la Nouvelle* with the *table des matières* at the back; by the following year the name was English with contents listed both at the begin-


ning and the end. Now the transition seems complete and the contents appear only at the beginning.

In each manifestation the journal has contained material of interest, though rarely of a challenging kind. Philippe Séjourné's interview with Graham Greene in issue number four, enticing in prospect, is distressingly flimsy. The second issue reproduces some statements that were made during a "round table" discussion about "Forms and Evolution of the Short Story", including contributions by Anthony Burgess and John Wain. These are not perhaps pieces the authors would wish preserved but Burgess is on agreeably tendentious form, asserting startlingly that Joyce's major short story is not "The Dead" but *Ulysses*. For the rest, the range is fairly wide, with discussion not just of the predictable Poe and Melville, but of African short stories, and a whole issue has been dedicated to those of the Commonwealth.

The latest number is a special V.S. Pritchett issue. It begins with an excellent interview by Ben Forkner and Séjourné with their subject in sparkling form on his family, his own work and the short story in general. The essays that make up the rest of the volume are written by French critics, not only in English but also, for the most part, in an almost dismayingly Anglo-Saxon style. Claude Larrière's essay "Explosions and Catharses" begins with a bluntness that verges on parody: "The crisis which is at the heart of so many short stories is often brought about by the encounter of two characters", a statement as unarguable as it is unilluminating. Apart from Pascal Aquien's Lacanian musings in her psychoanalytic reading of "The Diver", the journal reads as if structuralism never happened — an odd effect.

Sean French


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THE TIMES

Changing its spots

Next Thursday: on the books page, the new edition of *The Leopard*, by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, reviewed by Peter Ackroyd, with *Places of My Infancy*, and two short stories; plus: Gillian Greenwood reviewing fiction, from Rayner Heppenstall to Peter Tinniswood; Tim Heald on the latest thrillers



... and regularly in *The Times*, Bernard Levin (left) on the way we live now, David Miller on sport, Kenneth Fleet on finance, Irving Wardle on the theatre, Geoffrey Smith on politics, Frank Johnson in Parliament, Paul Griffiths on music, Suzy Menkes on fashion, John Woodcock on cricket, Clifford Longley on the Church, Philip Howard on words, Jonathan Meades on eating out, David Robinson on the cinema, the humour of Miles Kington... and much more each week



The world's most famous newspaper (25p)

Fear and loathing

Patricia Craig

MICHAEL COX and R. A. GILBERT (Editors)
The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories
504pp. Oxford University Press. £12.95.
0192141635

The ghost story has been pronounced dead, but it won't lie down. As a genre, it's true, it tends to be associated with the past, but it has never become completely outmoded, or failed to find a satisfactory form of expression at any time, including the present. With its traditional framework – but one affording abundant scope for ingenuity – its pungent subject-matter and power to rivet the imagination, it offers satisfactions of a straightforward type (many ghost stories, of course, are found wanting in these respects; those that are not have become the "classics" of the genre).

It has been held to belong quintessentially to a particular period – the hansom-cab era, for example, or the frenetic 1920s; it has persisted in accommodating itself, however, to all kinds of innovation in everyday life, from the inception of motor transport on. Ghosts weren't slow to latch on to the telephone as a means of getting through. Not only horse-drawn carriages, but the cabins of passenger liners, not to mention hotel rooms, have long been subject to supernatural infestations. During the 1920s and 30s, indeed, it became *de rigueur* for ghost-story writers to combine eerie effects with an unromantic or modern location. M. R. James had set the tone: sedate and subtle, in opposition to the exorbitance of an earlier generation. His stories cut more ice, when it came to chilling the blood of an up-to-date readership, than those of "Vernon Lee" (for example), whom prosaic settings left cold.

The stories in *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories* are arranged chronologically: we start with "The Tapestry Chamber" (1829), by Sir Walter Scott, and come up to the late 1960s with Robert Aickman. (The last story in the book is T. H. White's "Soft Voices at Passenheim", which contains a profusion of ghosts; this was published in 1981 but actually written during the 1930s.) The editors have gone about the business of selecting with considerable discernment: unlike many similar anthologies, this one succeeds, by and large, in excluding the tedious, makeshift and overdrawn. It gets off to an auspicious start: the Scott story concerns the visit of an army officer to an aristocratic friend; the bedroom allocated to the doughty guest isn't designed to induce sound sleep.

This is perhaps the commonest experience of ghost-seers: settling down for the night, only to be thoroughly unsettled within a short time. The unfortunate heroine of the M. E. Braddon story in Michael Cox and R. A. Gilbert's collection keeps starting out of her sleep to see something queer in a corner. F. Marion Crawford's deservedly well-known "The Upper Berth" has a hero whose sleeping-quarters have already been commandeered by a corpse:

Raw and cooked

Jo-Ann Goodwin

JOSEPHINE SAXTON
Little Tours of Hell: Tall tales of food and holidays
146pp. Pandora. £9.95 (paperback, £3.95).
0863380947

Holidays are frequently the occasion of tension and misery; relationships which survive ordinary difficulties, protected by the rituals of everyday life, descend into bitterness and recrimination the moment couples are left alone to face each other without the comfortable pattern of work, home and friends.

Josephine Saxton tells us of a series of disastrous holidays; ruined by a variety of complaints – the commonplace diarrhoea and recalcitrant children, the more bizarre disadvantages of being chained to the kitchen wall while your host prepares the seasoning for the meat pies he is going to make (you being the meat he has in mind).

Food is a subject which seems a natural accompaniment to talk of holidays, such periods being the time when one departs

waking up to a disagreeable sensation of dampness is the first thing that alerts him to this fact. A dead judge, metamorphosed into a rat, makes the nights lively for the foolhardy tenant in Bram Stoker's "The Judge's House", before doing for him altogether. As for H. G. Wells's "The Red Room" – nothing specific materializes here, but candlelight, shadows and the expectation of the untoward work their own effect. It is possible to succumb to an atmosphere.

A room, or a house, unfriendly to successive occupants: this is a central motif. "The Empty House" (the title of the Algernon Blackwood story included here) might stand for all of them, though it's in a square in a seaside town and not in any sense distinguished in appearance. What keeps it empty? A young man by the name of Shorthouse is due to find out – after being co-opted by his aunt as a looker-on at the unnatural re-enactment of a bygone crime. What else disconcerts the characters in these stories? Watching two men dig a grave and subsequently finding the spot undisturbed, and having a jolly evening with people later shown not to exist: these are two ways of receiving a jolt. In the L. P. Hartley story, someone is pursued with hostile intent by a visitor from Down Under – "Down Under" in two senses, being both Australian and dead. There's an effectively grim jocularity about this title.

The anthology accommodates a good range of tones: dramatic, matter-of-fact, discursive, affecting, volatile. A near-frivolity, or rather ruthless breeziness, is used to excellent effect in the jaunty "Hand-in-Glove", by Elizabeth Bowen; a somewhat less successful exercise in a similar mode is May Sinclair's "The Victim", about a chopped-up corpse returning (re-assembled) to express its gratitude to its dispatcher – it was glad to be shot of the business of living. The unwary hero of A. E. Coppard's "Ahoy, Sailor Boy!" is taken aback, on a public bench, to find himself making advances to an apparition: there's a suggestion of a frolic about this one.

"Bosworth Summit Pound", by L. T. C. Roitt, is a full-blooded tale involving seduction, betrayal, murder and haunting, and told with the greatest economy, while others – Robert Aickman's "The Ciceroes" is an example – are somewhat etiolated. T. H. White links his unearthly emanations with damp and mist ("the watery air that makes things go mouldy; go soft and cold and wet and furry"); he's among the authors who show a kind of playful relish for the creepy. Nearly all the contributors to this anthology, specialists in the uncanny, have met Elizabeth Bowen's requirements for the short story in general: they allow no slackening of purpose, or adventitious emotion, to affect their work. They are adept at envisaging a rum but "terribly likely world", a world "just at the edge of normal experience" – whether they've played strictly according to the rules, or tampered with the rules to reflect the mood of the time.

from well-established eating habits (often learning painfully that discretion is the better part of valour), and food is enthusiastically explored here: a young girl in 1950s Halifax cooks spaghetti *bolognese* to impress bohemian friends from the local drama society; huge slices of home-made cake are choked down in a desperate attempt to conciliate hostile in-laws. As Saxton indicates, food and its preparation are central to many of our social rites, and the stories are perceptive in their treatment of the agonies such rites may inspire.

Little Tours of Hell is extremely funny, and never brittle. The pieces bear re-reading, and the jokes do not lose their charm.

Reviews and Reviewing: A guide (258pp. Mansell. £22.50. 0 7201 1823 9), edited by A. J. Walford, "aims to provide guidelines for the reviewing of books and audio-visual materials in a variety of disciplines". There are two introductory essays, "The art of reviewing", by the editor, and "The administrative role of the book-review editor", by J. D. Hendry; and twelve chapters on specialized reviewing which list review journals by subject.

Traders and troopers

Christopher Hawtree

DAVID HUGHES and GILES GORDON (Editors)
Best Short Stories 1986
243pp. Heinemann. £10.95.
0 334 33419 8
ROBIN BAIRD-SMITH (Editor)
Winter's Tales: New Series, Two
223pp. Constable. £8.95.
0 09 467320 9

Best Short Stories 1986, edited by two veterans of the course, is a fair-sized collection of stories that were variously published, *pace* the title, last year. With *Winter's Tales* we see a newcomer to the fold in charge of a series which had a twenty-five-year run at Macmillan before petering out with an unwieldy volume which also included extracts from the year's novels. True to tradition, this clumsily-titled successor belies its pleasing suggestions of slipped feet competing with toasting-forks and sleeping dogs for a share of the open fire. By dint of unfashionably large type and other savings, Robin Baird-Smith manages to undercut his competitors by a cool two pounds. Such tactics, echoing as they do with the cries of high-street traders in a slump, lead one to suspect that a merger could well result.

Negotiations might be sticky at first. Gordon and Hughes are clearly chuffed at including Barbara Cartland's "A Present For Christmas 1816", and Baird-Smith, in his introduction – which might have been better called a preface – announces delight at having something by Michel Tournier, a "writer of genius", specially written for the book (he does not say how the others surfaced). Ostensibly evidence of a different scale of values, this is not as intractable a problem as it might seem: Miss Cartland's story is a relatively minor part of her *oeuvre* – "it was the pure unspoil love which is both human and Divine, and is in fact a present from God" – and on much the same level as M Tournier's two-page biblical allegory – "but the heavens remained for ever silent, and nev-

Escapee and debauchee

Savkar Altinel

MEIRA CHAND
The Painted Cage
339pp. Century. £10.95.
0 7126 1274 2

Half-Indian, half-Swiss by birth, English by upbringing and Japanese by adoption, Meira Chand is understandably popular with interviewers. Her novels, all of them about expatriate Westerners living in Japan, however, have had a more mixed reception, some reviewers expressing dismay at their lack of focus, their sentimental and melodramatic elements; at the same time praising the beauty and subtlety of Chand's prose.

The Painted Cage is free of many of the defects that mark its three predecessors. Loosely based on a late nineteenth-century *cause célèbre*, it concerns Amy, an English resident of Yokohama, on trial for the alleged murder of her husband. While the court, a British one in accordance with the privileges then enjoyed by foreigners, tries to determine whether the dose of arsenic which was the cause of death was administered by her or taken voluntarily by the deceased, who believed in the medicinal propensities of the poison, her past history is related through a series of flashbacks.

Amy is, twenty and bored by her native Somerset when Reggie Redmore, her senior by fifteen years and her social inferior by several grades, arrives on the scene on sick leave from the Colonial Service, apparently offering the promise of an exotic life and sexual fulfilment. The dream of colour and excitement soon dies when they marry against the wishes of her parents and move to a remote dusty corner of Malaya inhabited mainly by rats, bats and spiders. Reggie, debauched as he is, is alarmed and offended by the strength of her sexuality, which he regards as being quite improper in a wife. His continuing ill health then forces them to leave for Japan, where they

er again did man hear the music of the spheres".

Gimmicks stripped away, a few other redundancies might be needed, *Desmond Hogan* and Philip Onkes could hardly feel aggrieved, in the circumstances, at being limited to one story apiece. Oakes's two tales of middle-aged lust for young flesh would sit oddly side by side. Although one protagonist succeeds where his counterpart does not, there is little to distinguish their respective dilemmas, and this is scarcely masked by a curious anatomical motif: "She had a lean, almost hairless body. On her lower belly there was a scar the colour of rust. 'My appendix', she said, 'gone but not forgotten'; meanwhile, in Essex, 'he undressed and as she watched him he was aware of the grey hairs on his chest and the scar which ran from his sternum towards his belly. 'An old operation', he said. 'I had a duodenal. They severed the vagus nerve.'"

Drawn in by household names, customers might justly be disappointed: such use of materials is thrifty to the point of cheeseparing. In Baird-Smith's volume Rachel Billington and Piers Paul Read are among the old troopers on automatic pilot in the fog, and Borges's whimsy would have been better suited to Gordon's 1983 *Shakespeare Stories*. It is heartening to find that less familiar names offer better value, and it is Gordon and Hughes who provide the more enterprising number of these. J. G. Ballard's experimental "Answers to a Questionnaire" may seem merely routine, but Christopher Burns's "Dealing in Fictions" makes something fresh from self-referential techniques. Glad as one is that the success of his *Collected Stories* has brought Frank Tully back to fiction, "Retired People" appears slight beside "The Assassination of Indra Gandhi".

Such writing has one wishing once more that a publisher would use some marketing muscle to develop and sustain an outlet for short fiction, which, vigorously edited and frequently issued, might stand a chance of attracting a wider custom than will be achieved by these dusty emporia.

become increasingly alienated from each other and she seeks consolation with a string of lovers, acquiring the reputation for moral laxity that is going to tell against her at her trial.

Calculating, manipulative and more than a little vain, Amy is not the most likeable of heroines, yet hers is a complex plight. It would be all too easy to read this book as the story of a highly sexed woman destroyed by the conventions of Victorian society, and at times the author herself seems to endorse such an interpretation. She also, however, constantly hints that for Amy sex is ultimately only an escape, a sort of sublimation in reverse, a cheap substitute for the real transcendence which she feels to be possible but cannot achieve or even conceive of. In the end she is less like Emma Bovary than Dorothea Brooke, and the only one of her lovers to bring her any satisfaction, an eccentric scholar named Matthew. "Mad Mat" Armitage, has more than a touch of Will Ladislav about him.

Amy is quite capable of being depressed by the lives of her fellow expatriates, few of whom are in fact slaves to Victorian morality, and she is not unmoved by her husband's condition: Sometimes now I find myself feeling sorry for him. He's trapped within himself. He can't find a way to be a bigger, better man. He maddens me unbearably, but at the same time he's rather sad. He hides behind his hedonism; he is afraid to face himself. He believes he is enjoying life. Just look at the wreck he is, the waste of each year of his life. Poor man. I've lost all that anger I used to feel towards him.

It is insights like this into what Amy eventually comes to call "the disease of living" that broaden the scope of this novel and render its various beautiful images of imprisonment – a huge blue butterfly attached to a silk thread like a dog on a leash, prostitutes in red lacquer cages outside a Japanese brothel, a sparrow trapped inside a ruined teahouse, animals performing tricks, their eyes bright with anger, a fair, crickets and cicadas on sale at a market stall – more powerful, making the book its author's most substantial achievement to date.

Alien postings

William Scammell

FRANK ORMSBY
A Northern Spring
Sipp. Secker and Warburg. £4.95.
0 334 34100 X

"Travelling", the first poem in Frank Ormsby's latest book, celebrates the power of the imagination, but without resorting to inflationary aestheticism, or covertly proposing artists as the true heroes of our time. It concerns his grandmother's "passion for Europe" as expressed in her French journal, packed full of sketches and train timetables, "Oriels and fine vistas". It soon transpires, however, that she is an ingenious stay-at-home who does all her travelling in her head:

She died in her Russian phase,
in the hard winter of 1913,
unk between pillows as though she struggled
through
some pass in the Caucasus –

The title sequence, which occupies thirty-five of the book's fifty-four pages, is a series of exclamations and monologues spoken mostly by American GIs training in Northern Ireland in the spring of 1944, prior to the Normandy landings (though that event is kept firmly offstage). The blurb refers to the Ulster conjured up in these poems as "a province of the mind" in which the visiting soldiers, and various other emigrants, "co-exist with victims and survivors of the present 'Troubles'". Unlike Heaney's bog poems or Mahon's snow parties and disused sheds, however, zooming downwards and upwards and backwards to get some perspective on a confused present, Ormsby's squaddies caught up in war-in-a-foreign-place seem to me to speak, in a low key and with considerable integrity, only of themselves. One poem which lies outside the sequence, "Felix Peccione's Crucifixion", about a "soldier following instructions . . . / a Roman in exile, earning his daily bread", clearly comments on the role of British soldiers in Northern Ireland now, but that apart I find it difficult to see how the main sequence reflects any light on the present. Occasionally the predicaments and voices of these soldiers are reminiscent of Randall Jarrell's war poems, occasionally of James Fenton's (notably in "The Diary", which also lies outside the title sequence). The pervasive stance is that of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in Stoppard's play, little men caught up in history's alarms, as in "Cleo, Oklahoma", about a new small-town recruit: "I waved / from the steps of the Greyhound. Already I belonged / to somewhere else, or nowhere, or the next / photograph. The Mayor

Engaged and engaging

Tim Dooley

ANTHONY CRONIN
Letter to an Englishman
Sipp. Dublin: Raven Arts Press. £6.95.
Paperback, £2.95.
0 90097 94 7

Letter to an Englishman is a poem of slightly more than six hundred lines, most of it written in 1972 (though not published until recently) in answer to a friend's queries about Irish politics and history. That it still seems interesting and genuine may be a tribute to the intelligence and lucidity that characterize Anthony Cronin's writing; more depressingly, the poem's continuing topicality underlines one of Cronin's grimmer conclusions about his country and its relationship with Britain – "Our his- tory's murderous; but also static". The poem begins with a comparatively gentle view of his- tory as "a finished matter" while Cronin, in various beautiful images of imprisonment – a huge blue butterfly attached to a silk thread like a dog on a leash, prostitutes in red lacquer cages outside a Japanese brothel, a sparrow trapped inside a ruined teahouse, animals performing tricks, their eyes bright with anger, a fair, crickets and cicadas on sale at a market stall – more powerful, making the book its author's most substantial achievement to date.

spread his arms / and had trouble with History":

There was dust everywhere. It was too late to cry
or too early. I heard the Mayor say:
"We've had History before now, folks, in this town.
There'll be more History soon".

That is neatly done, and so is the recruit's instant deracination. Comprehensive incomprehension is certainly one way of coping, or satisfactorily not coping, with one's personal fate or destiny – big words best shuddered at in quotes. But perhaps our post-colonial myth of belonging "somewhere else, or nowhere, or the next / photograph" is as self-serving as the Victorian certainties it has replaced? It would be unfair to saddle Ormsby with personal responsibility for such exculpatory myths, or failure to unravel them; yet the concluding line of "Lesson of the War", even though spoken by a schoolboy – "I wish this war, this *fuckin'* war, was over" – seems peculiarly symptomatic in its hopelessness. The title echoes Henry Reed's celebrated poem, and the line quoted above is also a blackly humorous comment on Reed's "ensuing the spring", for the child who speaks has seen a girl "lying with some airman at the foot of a field. / They rolled in their bare skins and gave a cry / and then stopped fighting". As in some of Keith Douglas's poems, making love and making war are not always readily distinguishable.

This tone of palpable human ignorance is well expressed in the book's concluding poem, "Home". Ormsby is often at his best in such short pieces as this:

Once, in the Giant's Ring, I closed my eyes
and thought of Ireland,
the air-wide, skin-tight, multiple meaning of here.

When I opened them I was little the wiser,
in that, perhaps, one
with the first settlers in the Lagan Valley
and the Vietnamese boat-people of Portadown.

The juxtapositions make their own historico-ideological point.

What seems lacking in these sober and well-made poems is anything to counter the throw-away anti-heroics. This northern spring is indistinguishable from perpetual winter, and that carries its own risks of sentimentality and excess. "From the German" proposes some traditional values to set against the haphazard violence, but the proffered phrases – "an inviolable presence", "some treacherous gift of innocence restored" – are revealingly archaic, the soft underside of the tight-lipped idiom these poems deal in. There is much to admire in *A Northern Spring*, not least its ambitious reach, but the poetry of war, like any other, rests on its ability to be humanly convincing and convinced.

cool look at Ireland's political turmoils – at the economic factors underpinning both the complacent aftermath of the South's "bourgeois / Revolution" and Britain's continuing presence in the North. The tone is urbane, ironic, anti-romantic, whether chiding Heaney's avatism –

our "tribal conflict"
Has had its charms, being practically pre-historic;
Primordial, primal, primitive, all that guff
And thus good meaty strong poetic stuff,

or puncturing patriotic sentimentality –

What was lacking in a nation once again
Could be ignored, or glossed, or just forgotten
Until it raised again its croaky head.
And recited all the names of all the dead.

Cronin's severe conclusion places the blame for Ireland's status on "the dear guardian island here beside us". Without unification, Ireland still suffers from a "tragic . . . inhibition of development".

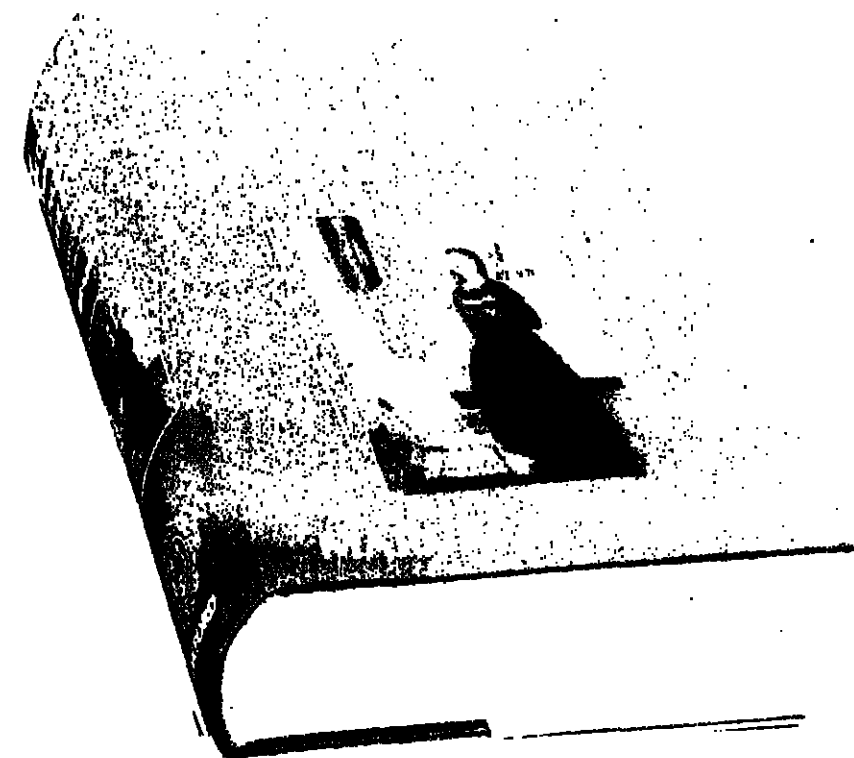
We are exhorted much, but oftenest we
Are told, don't think about your history.
The truth is that we haven't had one yet
And what you haven't had you can't forget.

The poem's sometimes baggy couplets and self-indulgent or self-vaunting asides betray the private nature of its original composition; but the acuity of its observations and the easy, amusing conversational manner make *Letter to an Englishman* an engaged poem which also manages to be engaging.

We liked it so much we thought you should have one

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TLS April 26 1985



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Magic, marriage and murder

Paul Keegan

PAUL BOWLES
Without Stopping
377pp. New York: Ecco Press, Paperback.
\$9.50.
088811 0614
Midnight Mass and Other Stories
190pp. Peter Owen. £8.95.
0720616470
MILLICENT DILLON (Editor)
Selected Letters of Jane Bowles 1935-1970
319pp. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press;
distributed in the UK by Airlift. £18.95
(paperback, £11.95).
087685 627 X.

One of Paul Bowles's stories takes for its epigraph the following, from Baudelaire:

If one could awaken all the echoes of one's memory simultaneously they would make a music, delightful or sad as the case might be, but logical and without dissonances. No matter how incoherent the existence, the human unity is not affected.

This could stand for his recently reissued autobiography, *Without Stopping*, an ordered account of a highly peripatetic existence. Bowles was born in 1911 of "eccentric, intolerant and querulous" New England stock. After an isolated and precocious childhood he briefly attended the University of Virginia before absconding to Europe. Back in New York he met Aaron Copland and was launched on his first career as a composer. Then followed the discovery of Morocco, itself to become a career of a kind. Back again in New York he met and married Jane Auer and was taught how to compose theatre music by Virgil Thomson, at

and his return to Tangier after the Second World War was decided by a dream that expressed his sense that lives are fatefully determined by place.

Without Stopping is perilously bland in its lack of "dissonances" and its demonstration that hanging on and waiting is really a form of falling on one's feet. Jane Bowles's *Selected Letters 1935-1970* tell a different story, uneasily recording the constant organizational feats she brought to a marriage which was admired by friends as a kind of conspiracy of separate-ness. Rarely were they in the same place at the same time, and the letters are woven around Paul's absences and silences. Consistent with *Without Stopping* he emerges as, very simply, a dark horse. Jane's own *oeuvre* was even smaller than her husband's: one excellent novel (*Two Serious Ladies*), a play and a collection of six short stories, all completed by her early thirties. Thereafter the story is one of mental blocks, fear of being a writer only because of Paul, of not writing and becoming abhorrent both to him and herself as a writer's wife.

Despite their arrangement to lead parallel lives, the cost in loneliness runs through Jane Bowles's letters, compounded by her lesbianism and the problems of making friends with Arab women during her years in Tangier. In 1957, at the age of forty, she suffered a stroke; thereafter, until her death in 1973, her letters are much concerned with the literal difficulties she experienced in writing them.

One of the remarkable things about this correspondence is Jane Bowles's consistently loyal and shrewd sense of her husband's gifts, and her acid dismissal of his following among the "Zen Buddhist-Bebop-Jesus Christ-Peyote Group". Paul Bowles certainly kept his dis-

American couple visit their son who is living in Sri Lanka. During their stay they go to the botanical gardens in Colombo, where they are waylaid by a hospitable but sinister local who insists on showing them around the garden house in which, as the son later discovers, he had murdered his bride many years before. The son resists the urge to tell his parents the coda to the story, on the grounds that they had sensed the core of the mystery "without needing the details". When, in *Without Stopping*, Bowles recalls being once referred to as a "devious young man", he considers this as a comment on his manner of relating stories:

When I begin to recount an incident, my first intention is to give a bare report of the principal events and nothing more and eventually allow extensions of that material. It must become increasingly obvious to the listener that I am withholding information; this can hardly be an endearing characteristic to observe in a friend.

This cultivation of distance extends to Bowles's use of dialogue. The couples and familiars of his fiction communicate in interchanges of frozen, amnesiac banality. In part this reflects his resistance to the confessional urges of speech, and in part his musical (rather than dramatic) sense of speech as being most expressive when suffused with irritation and bafflement.

Bowles's natural-historical imagination has been praised for its unerring conviction, but his

Amplitude for the anti-hero

Robin Ostle

M. M. BADAWI
Modern Arabic Literature and the West
236pp. Ithaca Press. £18.
086372 0447

Not even the most atavistic Arab intellectual would seek seriously to deny the overwhelming influence of Western Europe on the development of modern Arab literature. In spite of all the elements of narrative and drama which undoubtedly exist in pre-modern Arabic, the play, the short story and the novel, in the forms which modern literary criticism would recognize, did not exist before 1840.

The case of poetry was different: because of its position at the very core of high Arab Islamic culture, and because of the justifiably proud sense of history and tradition which it aroused in its public, it was not until the 1940s that it began to experience the dramatic external transformations which prose had begun to know almost half a century earlier. But even within the time-honoured *qasida* form, with its monorhyme and lines of regular hemistichs, poetry from 1900 on began its own slow revolution of language and imagery.

There is of course nothing surprising in this wholesale importation of literary forms, provided that one accepts that literature is just one aspect of the wider practices which are affecting societies at any given period: in the Near East and North Africa during the nineteenth century, the shapes of cities were transformed, often through brutal juxtapositions of *nouvelle ville* with traditional *medina*, as Western architectural styles and urban plans made their mark. Countries such as Egypt became locked into a global economic system. European communities established themselves in the cities of the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean, and their impact on these societies was out of all proportion to their numbers. The cult of occidentalism began to reign supreme among the urban élites of the Near East and North Africa and was expressed through new educational systems, dress and furnishings. Thus cultural polarities were created, perfectly symbolized by the New Cairo of the Khedive Isma'il lying alongside the old city of the Fatimids and the Mamluks. The fraught, complicated and ambiguous relationships which exist between old and new, between modern technocrat and religious conservative, between the numerous categories of *bourgeois* and the rural and urban poor, have all informed the evolution of modern Arabic literature.

The last story in *Midnight Mass*, "In the Red Room", is obliquely about story-telling, and offers a clue to Bowles's nesthelle: An elderly

sense of place is primarily aural. This is significant in explaining why his casually exact settings so completely oppress and marginalize their inhabitants; in his world speech is the prerogative of landscape and the natural world, not of man. Nor does Bowles ever offer an account of human will, though his language of appetite and obscure compulsion is subtle and suggestive. Purposelessness – often a central theme – is invariably punished, hence the tendency for violence to become the normative gesture in his fiction.

There is a group of stories in which Bowles takes the transfiguration of violence a step further and writes calm, animistic conceits about possession and violation. It is remarkable that the nature of his material has so rarely compromised his linguistic tact; also, that the ordinary is always present within his other, stranger perspectives. In *Let It Come Down* Thami, an upper-class Muslim, has married an illiterate mountain girl and is having regrets. We glimpse their domesticity only once, but it is enough:

Thami was furious with his wife: she had a nose-bleed and was letting it drip all over the patio. . . . It had fallen in several places on the baby's clothing. Thami stepped nearer. As he did so, he saw a drop of blood fall square in the infant's face, just above his lips. A cautious tongue crept out and licked it. "Thami was beside himself, "Hachouma!" he cried, seizing the baby and holding it out of reach so that it began to scream in earnest.

West, that they focus attention firmly on the predicament of Arab writers in the twentieth century as they have coped creatively with their own tradition in the light of Western forms and conventions in literature and in life. Most of the articles have been reprinted from specialist journals, and the coverage of the different genres is uneven: the novel looms large throughout the book, while there is a relative paucity of material on the short story and the drama. But there are excellent accounts of the principal ideological preoccupations of this literature in the twentieth century and of the struggles of poetry both to build on and emancipate itself from the tradition. Chapters Three, Four and Five have a common thread which adds much to the unity of this volume and which is not always readily associated with those who have been in the avant-garde of Arabic literature: the relation of some of these authors to Islam. Particularly at the present time, it is useful to be reminded that arch liberals and intellectuals such as Haykal and Taha Husain, and literary artists such as Yahya Haqqi and Tawfiq al-Hakim, are committed Muslims whose attitude to their religious tradition recalls all the confidence and broad-mindedness of the high medieval period.

These articles raise some provocative questions which still deserve serious critical consideration, particularly in relation to the history of the Arabic novel. When discussing Najib Mahfuz's Cairene novels, written between 1945 and 1959, Badawi comments:

The slow unfolding of events, the meticulous enumeration of detail, the heavy sociological documentation, the constant authorial presence, the anxious concern to produce a tightly knit plot, the scrupulous care to maintain an objective stance, give these novels, despite their unmistakable Egyptian character, the air of nineteenth-century European fiction.

These massive chronicles by Mahfuz are indeed the Arabic equivalent of the nineteenth-century "classical" novel in Europe, but if we accept that form and content in art are not divisible elements which can be separated or put together at the author's whim, then what are we to make of these essentially nineteenth-century forms which portray the hapless, anti-heroic existences of Mahfuz's characters? Badawi has drawn attention to Idwar al-Kharat's perceptive comment that al-Mazini created a genuine anti-hero in his *Ibn al-Kalbi*, probably written in 1925 and 1926. Indeed most of the convincing protagonists in the Arabic literature of this century are anti-heroes. And this is hardly surprising, given that the possibilities for most individuals to dominate their destinies in these societies are, to say the least, limited.

Paperbacks

Architecture

HENRY ADAMS. *Mont Saint Michel and Chartres*. Introduction and notes by Raymond Carver. 439pp. Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 039054 5. □ When early this century Henry Adams took a fictional American niece on an imaginative tour of the Middle Ages by way of the Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres Cathedral, the result was this minor classic. It teems with facts (not all indisputable) gleaned from his studies in history, art and architecture, literature, theology and philosophy. Facts, though, are this magician's props, used to create an illusion of a coherent, unified medieval attitude to life. Was he duped by his own tricks? Surely not. But how entertained we are by the gusto and enthusiasm of his performance, as he makes places, people, texts live before us. Raymond Carver's introduction situates Adams in the American post-Romantic tradition, examines his concept of impersonal systems overriding the individual, and considers his respect for, and affinity with, Aquinas. Readers new to Adams might, however, prefer to watch the illusion before learning how it is achieved. The original English edition of the book was reviewed in the *TLS* of February 19, 1914.

Biography and memoirs

NEIL M. GUNN. *The Atom of Delight*. 243pp. Polygon. £4.95. 0 948275 14 6. □ A few years before he wrote his autobiography *The Atom of Delight* in 1956 (reviewed in the *TLS* of January 25, 1957), the Scottish novelist Neil M. Gunn was sent a copy of Eugen Herrigel's *Zen in the Art of Archery*. The spirit of this book was to infuse *The Atom of Delight*, not always to its advantage. Without the influence of Herrigel, Gunn might have written an account of Highland childhood to rival Edwin Muir's. There is certainly every sign that he was capable of doing so (in particular, a story of himself as a small boy catching salmon by "ding and tailing"). Instead, Gunn's fascination for Herrigel's "Eastern viewpoint" comes to dominate the text and submerge the study of Zen in mystical (a word Gunn disliked) speculation. The vocabulary of Zen Buddhism is not always suited to a Highland accent. Nevertheless, there is sufficient of interest in *The Atom of Delight* to justify its republication. This edition comes with an introduction by Gunn's biographer, J. B. Pick.

Cookery

ELIZABETH RAY (EDITOR). *The Best of Eliza Acton*. 365pp. Penguin. £6.95. 0 14 046785 8. □ Eliza Acton (1799-1859), a poet who was recommended by her publishers to write a cookery book instead of verse, was the author of the much-plagiarized *Modern Cookery for Private Families* (1845). This work influenced Mrs Beeton's *Household Management* (1861), then the staple of dictionaries and manuals for the housewife in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and then the modern cookery book. Acton is a very sympathetic writer. The clarity of her style and her positive attitude towards the "little facts of kitchen life" are as much an attraction of her books as the practical and, indeed, scientific nature of her approach. Elizabeth Ray has selected the recipes most adaptable to modern kitchens and she provides an excellent introduction and notes (one of which suggests that the origin of "First catch your hare", attributed to Mrs Glasse, might be a reference to "casing" or skinning rather than to "catching"). This edition, the paperback version of the Longmans edition of 1968, also reflects the changed fashion in cookery books. It is an unchanged version of the 1974 Penguin edition, printed in a slightly larger format.

Film

V. F. PERKINS. *Film as Film: Understanding and Judging Movies*. 198pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 01477 1. □ Out in the darkness waits *Film* as film's potential audience: all the serious cinephiles who have never considered reading film theory, and some who have read too much of it. Perkins deals with the films that have made the most of the ones theorists think should be avoided. He draws his examples from cinema's commercial heyday rather than the canon of art. First, he writes subtly and feelingly about the process of putting together a film and the

experience of watching one. Although he feels film's emotional power, Perkins is a rigorous formalist when it comes to analysis. He scrutinizes structure until style and meaning become clear; a brilliant shot-by-shot breakdown of the shower scene from *Psycho* lies at the book's centre. First published in 1972, and reviewed in the *TLS* of September 28, 1973, *Film as Film* uncannily anticipates developments in film technology and the rise of a new generation of directors and stars, and Perkins's call for balance and coherence will have a sympathetic audience in cinemas where the current slick disasters are playing.

History

C. P. FITZGERALD. *China: A short cultural history*. 624pp. Hutchinson Cresset Library. £7.95. 0 09 16875 19. □ Fitzgerald's work has been essential reading for the student of classical Chinese civilization since it was first published in 1935. The *TLS* of November 16 of that year described it as "concisely planned" and "brilliantly executed". Articulate as well as informative, it has also been indispensable to the general reader. But vastly more updating is required than was possible when it was last revised in 1976: It will not do to have the archaeological finds at Anyang in the 1920s described as if they were made last week, while the wealth of discoveries that have come to light since the end of the Cultural Revolution pass without a mention. This book deserves to remain standard, but will join the ranks of the historic reprint unless the publishers also undertake a thorough reworking of its style and presentation for its next and fifth edition.

Literature

THOMAS WEISKEL. *The Romantic Sublime: Studies in the structure and psychology of transcendence*. 220pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £7. 0 8018 3347 9. □ A combination of historical, psychoanalytic and semiotic criticism, Weiskel's study dazzles with the perplexities that characterize the sublime itself. A brilliant and important book, it is by no means easy to read. Exposing the role of repression in an aesthetic which claims absolute freedom, Weiskel argues that the ambivalence at the heart of the sublime moment yields a psychological structure identical to that of Freud's equally ambivalent concept of sublimation. Extending this further, he analyses its peculiar logic of pain and pleasure, absence and presence, to imply for the sublime a crucial ideological role in the history of culture. His discussions of Wordsworth, Blake, Collins, Stevens, Keats and Shelley, attempt a unique kind of criticism, at once realist and idealist, dismantling the metaphors of Romanticism to re-establish its "ethos of expansion" in a modern "finite world whose limits are beginning to press against us". First published (posthumously) in 1976 and reviewed by Hugh Haughton in the *TLS* of December 24 of that year, Weiskel's book, which is reprinted with a new introduction by Harold Bloom, is essential reading for anyone interested in Romanticism.

Music

GUNTHER SCHULLER. *Early Jazz: Its roots and musical development*. 401pp. Oxford University Press. £6.95. 0 19 504043 0. □ Jazz has always been hostile to intellectuals; its practitioners as well as its most articulate interpreters have persistently emphasized the values of immediacy and improvisation at the expense of erudition and technique. Gunther Schuller seeks to redress the balance, stressing, sometimes too insistently, the importance of technical prowess. He prefers analysis to hagiography and his close look at the grammar of the genre results not only in a clear exposition of method but also in one of the first substantiated claims for jazz as art. In his warm portraits of virtuosos such as Jelly Roll Morton and Duke Ellington prominence is given to their intellectual curiosity and elitism and Schuller is pleased to record that the violinist George Morrison, after teaching himself the Kreutzer Etudes, went on to study at the New England Conservatory. The long and successful career as a jazz bandleader, that followed is, in the main, attributed to his classical studies. *Early Jazz* was first published in 1968 and was reviewed in the *TLS* of November 28 that year.

Natural history

F. KINGDON WARD. *The Land of the Blue Poppy*. with an introduction by Geoffrey Smith. 283pp. Cudogun. £7.95. 0 946313 66 0. □ The revelation during the last quarter of the nineteenth century of China's immense botanical riches, particularly in the western provinces, was followed by a frantic quest by horticulturalists for plant specimens. Frank Kingdon Ward, a young Cambridge graduate whose father had been Professor of Botany, was engaged by the Liverpool nurserymen Bees Limited to collect plants along the borders of Yunnan and Tibet. The regions through which he passed are still remote, and much of what he saw has undoubtedly vanished, but the documentary value of his story is greatly enhanced by the telling of it. His account is rich in anecdote, as when, although in principle he considered it "neither expedient nor of the slightest use for a traveller to interfere blindly with native customs", his Edwardian self-confidence once permitted him to prevent a woman from being thrashed because he wanted the whip – "a very nice leather one". This is a masterpiece of travel writing, in which keen observation of the scenery and the local peoples and their customs makes the purpose of plant hunting seem almost secondary. The book was first published in 1913 and was reviewed in the *TLS* of August 7 that year.

ROBERT W. SHELFORD. *A Naturalist in Borneo*. 358pp. with black-and-white plates and line drawings. Oxford University Press. £4.95. 0 19 582634 5. □ Shelford's notes on the fauna and flora of Borneo, gathered during the seven years he served as Curator of the Sarawak Museum (1897-1905), were first published in 1917 and reviewed in the *TLS* of January 11 of that year. A world authority on the unjustly despised cockroach, Shelford's descriptions of the wildlife of Borneo in the early years of this century make fascinating reading. Whether he is dealing with the "digestive economy" of the vicious Malayan crocodile or the nocturnal antics of the delicate lemur, he always manages to convey a sense of wonder at the endless ingenuity and variety of the Bornean natural world. In places, the author's pet theories about evolution or the role of mimicry in the animal kingdom tend to intrude a little too obviously, but these are more than offset by his humanity and humour. The work, which contains some interesting ethnographic material, is also enlivened by the author's sensitive line drawings of the bone structure of Bornean mammals and contemporary photographs of Kuching at the turn of the century.

Sociology

MASS-OBSERVATION. *Britain*, with a new introduction by Angus Calder. 245pp. Hutchinson Cresset Library. £5.95. 0 09 168771 3. □ Set up in the 1930s to study everyday life in Britain, Mass-Observation was motivated by a belief in scientific anthropology. *Britain*, the first book by the movement's two founders, Charles Madge and Tom Harrison, to set out the "data", was published as a Penguin Special in 1940 and became a best-seller. It was described in the *TLS* of February 17, 1940, as "entertaining, useful and aggressive". This edition has a new introduction by Angus Calder which describes the historical context of Mass-Observation and of the book: the underlying assumptions equating the citizens of Bolton and South London with "primitive man"; the statistics, which were vigorous if not rigorous; and the atmosphere of the Munich Crisis during which the book was compiled. A vivid collection of material sets the comments of "ordinary people" against extracts from newspapers and the speeches of politicians. Elsewhere, there is an analysis of a wrestling match in Worktown, a sentimental evocation of the Cockney, quirkiness of the Lambeth Walk and a presentation of the junketings of Wigan Wakes Week as "A Slight Case of Tumpism". The volume is illustrated with Humphrey Jennings's superb photographs of the period.

Reviews by D. D. R. Owen, James Campbell, Lindsay Duguid, Alice H. G. Phillips, David Hellwell, Anna Vaux, Holly Eley and Peter Carey.

INDEX OF BOOKS REVIEWED

Badawi, M. M. *Modern Arabic Literature and the West* 1326
Baird-Smith, Robin (Editor). *Winter's Tale: New Series*, Two 1324
Barbour, Philip L. (Editor). *The Complete Works of Captain John Smith 1580-1631* 1302
Betz, Hans Dieter (Editor). *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the demotic spells* 1316
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Volume Forty-six of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography in American Literary Publishing Houses, 1900-1980: Trade and paperback*, edited by Peter Dzwonkowski (465pp. Detroit MI: Gale. \$88. 0 8103 1724 9). It is the first of three planned in the series on publishing history: the others will be on firms founded before 1900 and on small and university presses. Entries for each firm provide a sometimes noticeably contracted synopsis of its history, including the principal features of the backlist. Some two hundred businesses are covered in all, many accompanied by selective references to further reading. As usual, the volume is extensively illustrated.

Autique Maps, by Carl Moreland and David Bannister, was first published by Longman in 1983. It is now in a second edition in the series of *Christie's Collectors Guides* (314pp. Oxford: Phaidon. £14.95. 0 7148 8034 5). In 1983 the authors denied any claim to original research, though they assembled a mass of information that has since proved invaluable to collector, librarian and dealer alike. Despite calls to expand parts of the book, this new edition remains largely unchanged apart from the correction of various errors.



which he was to make most of his living off and on for the next two decades. A more or less random selection from the activities of these years might include his writing incidental music for Orson Welles and Tennessee Williams, composing opera and film scores, working as music critic for the *Heald Tribune*, setting St John Perse's *Ambrase* to music and translating Sartre's *Huis Clos* for the stage. All this took place in the interstices of compulsive travel.

It was only during the Second World War, which tied him to New York at least part of the time, that Bowles turned to short stories. Influenced by Jane's industry and perhaps by the example of Auden, in whose Brooklyn Heights colony they were living, Bowles was thirty-eight when his first novel, *The Sheltering Sky*, was published in 1949.

Bowles is interested in the paradoxical and inscrutable formalities which attend all human arrangements in primitive societies. Many of the stories in *Midnight Mass and Other Stories* (two-thirds of them written since the *Collected Stories* appeared in 1977) concern relations between mothers and sons, masters and servants, husbands and wives, and these are all used to posit the larger interdependence between rational and superstitious practices in any culture. Morocco obsesses Bowles because it so clearly displays such polarities – the undermining of Nazarene medicine by native superstition is one of his favourite comic themes – and because he perceives deviance to be the central social fact, rather than a direction chosen by the individual. Bowles has steered his course in the conviction that "certain areas of the earth's surface contained more magic than others".